HIPPIES: A STUDY IN THE SOCIOLOGY OF KNOWLEDGE

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is an attempt to explain the historical origins and the cultural location of the hippie counter-culture in Britain in the late 1960s.

Part One contains two intentions. It depicts and assesses existing theoretical attempts to account for the counter-culture; but it also works through dominant contemporary modes of cultural theory and the sociology of youth culture, in particular the work of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies. The overall aim of this section is to present a revision; a fresh cultural studies 'theoretical overview' to historically relocate the emergence of forms of bohemian counter-culture.

Part Two considers and charts such forms of bohemian ideology. The initial premise is that the hippie counter-cultural form was a modernised instance of bohemianism: an attempt to formulate the ground rules of an aesthetic revolution and present a cultural critique according to the 'problems' and 'solutions' of artistic practice. It reveals the historical development of the institutions of artistic practice which have kept the Romantic, bohemian ideology of cultural criticism alive and pertinent. More specifically I concentrate on the development of art education.

I conclude that existing accounts of the hippie counter-culture which attempt to locate its emergence in either the language of youth-cultural expression or the 'spirit of the age' are superficial and misleading. The counter-culture, like other forms of cultural ideology, must be related to its institutional setting: hence I stress the significance of art education, as a 'carrier' of conflicting cultural and artistic ideologies, through to the 1960s.

The thesis is primarily focussed on hippie ideology; therefore my methodology essentially presents problems of historical research - into the dominant influences on the formation of a modernised aesthetic counter-cultural form, and the attempts offered by the hippies themselves, specifically in the written media and music, to redefine the rules of cultural discourse.

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An artist can choose not to be an artist, but
he cannot be an artist who has chosen not to be
an artist.

John Fowles, The Aristos

Not dedicated to any Prince in Christendom for fear
it might be thought a Bold piece of arrogance.
Not dedicated to any man of quality for fear it might
be thought too affecting.
Not dedicated to any learned body.
of men of either of the universities, or the
Royal Society, for fear it might be thought
An uncommon piece of vanity.
Nor dedicated to any particular friend
for fear of affending another.
Therefore dedicated to nobody
But if for once we may suppose
Nobody to be everybody as everybody
Is often found to be nobody, then is this work
Dedicated to anybody
By their most humble
and devoted, W.Hogarth.

William Hogarth, The No Dedication

INTRODUCTION

> If you step back and look at it in sociological terms, already it can be seen as one of the golden ages of this century. The '20s and the '60s. Where are we going now? I mean, fuck, the seventies were completely dreadful and the belt began to tighten. Two million people out of work and people are now comparing it to the depression. It's going to be considered as a golden era by historians because of the financial shrinkage that's taken place, just on economic terms. Then we add to that the cultural excitement of that era. I mean people bore me silly about Bloomsbury and the Yellow Books. Maybe Geldof's fans would think the '60s boring but I'm telling you the Boomtown bloody Rats wouldn't have existed if it hadn't been for what happened in the '60s.
>
> Richard Neville, talking to Dick Tracey, NME,11/10/1980.

I embarked on the somewhat anachronistic enterprise of a sociology doctorate in the World Cup summer of 1978 with the rather general idea of writing a thesis on hippie ideology in the late sixties. With the self-assured air that infallibly seems to overtake the otherwise clear-headed perceptions of the fresh research student, having submitted a research proposal the rest was coasting downhill. The thesis was already at least half-written in my mind. If my research strategies were vague and unformed, and my 'substantial original contribution to knowledge' as yet uncertain, I had, I thought, one positive advantage over the authors of other analytical, sociological accounts: I could vividly recall my own progression through various youth-cultural styles in the late sixties which had included a spell as a

hippie during my time at art school in 1967 and 1968. With these recollections central to my growing feelings of self-confidence, I set out to read the available 'serious' interpretations of the hippie phenomenon.

To develop my own theoretical perspective, I approached the two American hippie 'classics': Roszak's The Making of a Counter Culture and Reich's The Greening of America (Reich's book had accompanied me on my 'voyage of discovery' to India in 1972 - although my lasting reading impressions of the trip involve James Michener's youth odyssey, The Drifters). I soon found the cultural theories contained in both books, developed largely around Haight-Ashbury's Summer of Love and generally specific to the American counter-culture, made no sense either of the subtleties and peculiarities of the British experience or of my own, what seemed at the time fairly peripheral experience of hippie culture in an English provincial town. Both seemed couched in terms alien to a British sociologist and a British participant. Mentally shelving the problems, I went off in search of accounts more sociological, more reassuringly English in their tone and cultural implications.

I was drawn immediately to the substantial output of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies - an institution seeming, at the time of my exploratory review, to be consolidating a strong position at the forefront of British cultural studies in general and in the sociology of youth culture in particular. Feeling the honest, decent urge to do full justice

to a so obviously influential and respected theoretical system, I worked through the CCCS's general cultural theory and its acclaimed sociology of working-class youth culture, forgetting, for the moment, my primary concern with the hippie counter-culture - by general consent, a middle-class phenomenon.

My first impression was a sense of amazement; swiftly followed by one of annoyance. Despite the Centre's declared and laudable intentions (to 'rescue' cultural theory and the activities of youth from their many protagonists, both within and outside serious sociological discourse), the offered body of 'theory' and 'ethnography' was riddled with inconsistencies. I found that not only did Centre theory fail in its intentions, serious enough in itself, and hedge declared bets: it failed to make coherent sense to me as both a sociologist and again as a youth sub-cultural participant who had made a fairly untroubled transition from 'peace and love' hippie in 1967 and early 1968 to, a few months later, an aggressive skinhead. Not to mention my earlier, if rather vicarious flirtation with the Mod style. While initially bemused by the super confident, Marxist-modernist rhetoric, I realised that there was something substantially wrong with their notions of culture and style: what they lacked, despite Centre claims, was a grounding in the real experience of youth's work and leisure situation and its more general situation in post-war capitalist culture.

I had been a declared hippie during my short but happy time at art school; then, on being thrown out for reasons not totally related to my artistic capabilities, I was thrown into

the job market to find a more proletarian style of living. I joined the pre-Falklands safety of the Royal Navy. And forced to remember these experience, I realised, by this stage in my theoretical deliberations, that changes in working-class, and for that matter middle-class youth styles had more to do with the real problems of work, money and correlated access to styles of leisure consumption than they had to do with abstract notions of 'parent culture'. I realised that the 'theoreticism' of Centre theory reduced to grossly simplified class extrapolations. Then I realised that despite the Marxist trappings, there was no coherent theory of class beneath Centre theory's platitudes: that the Centre's trained semiological imagination, caught up in the heady days of discourse fever, could only 'read' sub-cultural expression backwards from a given 'style' to a class base of youth culture defined in terms only of cultural and leisure institutions. Youth's experience of the material world of social production, and the level of contradiction between this experience and dominant cultural ideologies had, despite the stated claims, disappeared from the Centre's assembled texts.

In the World Cup summer of 1982, I have few reasons to doubt that the Centre's grip on significant elements of the cultural theory imagination is undiminished. In a 1982 edition of the up-market performance arts magazine ZG I read the following, surely worth £5 of Private Eye's money:

> The essence of sub-cultural style is its relation to its parent culture. Its dependence and independence are the structure whithin which co-option of

> signs of the dominant code are converted into enclosed meanings. Obsolete signs are reappropriated, old garments are rediscovered, and double meanings are generated to divide insiders from outsiders.
>
> (Rosetta Brooks: Between the Street and the Screen)

This is certainly 'the essence' of the Centre's theory of working-class sub-cultural style: what I've always found worrying is the application of the formula to the counter-culture. Where, in the Centre, recourse to abuse, popular stereotype and neglect replaces the 'discoveries' and 'readings' of working-class youth styles.

Confronted by the inapplicable categories of American accounts and the less than convincing Mills and Boon sociology (popular, romantic, best-selling) of sub-cultural theory, I was placed in the worrying existential position of having all available theoretical paradigms collapse around my ears. I thought back more to my own hippie days at art school.

There seemed a 'natural' link between certain ideologies surrounding art school practice and what my memories and subsequent reading informed me were hippie ideological styles, patterns of leisure, and expressive forms. This prompted questions about the nature of art, of art schools, and the problem of artistic practice: why did all the hippie magazines I read in the late '60s talk so much about art and artistic innovation, and place so much stress on concepts such as creativity? Why did the hippie ideology of work and leisure seem to fit so appositely what we were told in the studio, and what we believed were the ideal conditions of artistic production? Why did what we read seem so much more colourful, artistic and fun in its politics than the dour and dire world of the contemporary left media? I thought the answers, the links must lay somewhere in the social

history of art.

But as I re-read Roszak, and encountered other texts attempting to historically locate the hippie counter-culture (particularly Musgrove's Ecstasy and Holiness, Mills' Young Outsiders, and, more recently, Bernice Martin's A Sociology of Contemporary Cultural Change), I had to admit certain parallels had already been drawn between the hippie expressive form and the idea of art. The concepts that kept reoccurring were Romanticism and Bohemianism. Even at the most commonsense level, their application permitted the part understanding of the 'counter', 'alternative' aspects of hippie ideology that Centre theory so wilfully neglected.

But as I relearned art history, lost in the more prosaic years of employment and sociology, I realised these concepts' use lacked a grounding in what I considered the sociological dimension: it seemed one thing to label hippies 'bohemians' or 'neo-Romantics'; quite another to define these terms acceptably, beyond the limiting abstractions of art history. Bohemianism was clearly 'something to do with art': but that 'something' needed to be located in terms of art as a material cultural practice, and seen in terms of the institutions which have carried, and made continually relevant, its meaning to artists up until the present day.

The social historians of art offered an advance. Arnold Hauser, certainly one of the more lucid Marxists to have made forays into art history, states in The Social History of Art:

> Romanticism was the ideology of the new society

> and the expression of the world-view of a generation which no longer believed in absolute values, could no longer believe in any values without thinking of their relativity, their historical limitations.(1)

Hauser's account of the social history of art retains, correctly in my view, the idea that the artist is at least a half-cognitive, half-intelligent individual aware of his or her cultural location and the 'necessary' contradiction between wider cultural and social demands and the 'gift' of creativity. This, of course, is a currently unfashionable perspective: Janet Wolff, for example, in the recently published The Social Production of Art informs us the true sociology of art demystifies quaint, arcane and archaic notions of 'creativity', 'individual artist' and 'work of art' - only the role of the artist as a 'cultural producer' is important. But this view, which can be savoured in varying approximations to the English language in most copies of Screen, seems to miss a good deal of the point. Exorcising the chimera of the 'creative artist' from art, trying to lay the ghost of 'creativity' itself, is chasing cultural studies moonbeams: their significance is that post-Romantic, capitalist, modern artistic practice has to a large extent been constructed around such concepts' power. 'Creativity' may not exist: its importance in the history of art is that artists have believed in its ontological existence. Artists have believed that the idea of artistic progression revolves around a voyage of individual discovery, just as avant-garde movements in the past two hundred years have preached that modifying and redefining the nature of artistic practice is

the key to wider cultural and social change. The Romantic legacy of artistic practice, with its stresses on creativity, change, and the privileged cultural position of the artist cannot be wished-away quite so easily.

So the first lesson I learned in approaching the social history of art for my sociological grasp on the continued cultural relevance of Romantic and bohemian ideologies was caution. Again, what was generally lacking was a developed understanding of the institutional forms carrying Romantic and bohemian definitions of art and, equally importantly, those institutions within and outside of art antagonistic to the Romantic mode. Those institutions, in other words, against which the Romantic cutting edge was honed and the bohemian form of artistic and cultural refusal worked out.

By this time I had come to see the limitations of conceiving the hippie counter-culture in terms of simple (middle) class reductionism: the problem seemed one of the essential class location of artistic practice set historically in two hundred years of capitalist social and cultural demands. I was also increasingly sceptical of the usual placing of hippies as just another youth sub-culture: as an expressive cultural form to be set conveniently in the chronology of post-war sub-cultural styles. There was more depth to the counter-culture than this: and this depth was indeed its modernisation, in the late '60s, of the Romantic cultural critique; its refusal to 'see' dominant, bourgeois culture according to conventional style through a regeneration of the bohemian conscious and creative

spirit of refusal. The style of hippie cultural questioning had not come 'from nowhere' as surely as it had not come from abstract dislocations in its 'parent culture'. But if the hippie counter-culture was a re-assertion of bohemianism, the problem remained of the institutional, historical transmission of this style of cultural disaffection. What were the material historical strands that tied the hippies to earlier forms of Romanticism and the bohemian refusal? If bohemianism was 'something to do with art', what was the 'something', the commonly-experienced and concrete problems of artistic production in the late '60s which provoked the recourse to the motifs and ideological styles of the past? Why, in short, was the 'artistic solution' so crucial in the construction of the hippie counter-culture? What follows in the body of this thesis is an elaboration of these ideas and questions.

Part One settles accounts, clears the theoretical ground and focusses the problems. My concern with Roszak, Reich, Martin and others is obvious; my extended critique of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies perhaps less so. It arises partly with what I consider an understandable sense of indignation at the pervasive attraction of the 'Private Schulz' school of cultural studies. But it also arises for the following reason: the Centre certainly helped me see what cultural studies, and the study of the counter-culture were not; it also, perversely, helped me see what they were. In a way which will hopefully become apparent, the Centre's confusions and contradictions reinforced my belief in a

historical, institutional and sociological mode of analysis

Part Two, with the above points in mind, is an exploration of the development of bohemianism's ideological forms: its definition in terms of and usually against the formal and informal institutional organisation of artistic practice. The excursions into French, German and American art history reveal the ways in which the Romantic critique and the bohemian refusal have been modernised and their meanings made relevant to the contemporary cultural world. It reveals the historical making of the counter-cultural style; it reveals the history of the attempted institutional cultural redefinitions of the British hippie counter-culture in the late 1960s.

The matrix of bohemian history situates three problem areas of the capitalist artistic experience: reconciliation of the demands of the capitalist market with the demands of creative autonomy; the construction of modern art's political and social inclinations and dimensions; and the considerable problem of the forms of legitimation of modern artistic practice.(2)

A contemporary art critic, Henry Geldzahler, has argued in The Art Audience and the Critic:

> The history of modern art is also the history of the progressive loss of art's audience. Art has increasingly become the concern of the artist and the bafflement of the public. (3)

As the 'freedom' of capitalist market relations replaced the secure social relations of direct, unmediated court and aristocratic patronage, so the assumptions and conventions of artistic ways of seeing became loose and questionable. The

The artist was unsure of the demands of a new, bourgeois art public, just as that art public was unsure of both the use-value of art and the cultural role of the artist. What this effectively meant was that the 'sense' of art had to be remade; what was essential was the emergence of mediating institutions - the critic, the gallery, the art press - that could both inform the bourgeois art public on the aesthetic innovation of Romantic art and, to an extent, safely locate and control the potential cultural threats of artistic ways of seeing always, seemingly, one step ahead of mainstream cultural perceptions.

As Lawrence Alloway has stated, 'galleries largely control our access to art, both as an object for contemplation and for purchase.'(4) But then so does the critic and, to a lesser extent for most people, the glossy journals of the art press: in short, if it's not in a gallery, if it's not approved by a critic, and if it's not analysed by Art Forum or Art International, it's not Art. This process has been the cumulative effect of the power of the art establishment. And it's against this power - the effects on the material prospects of the artist, the limiting of the powers of artistic innovation, the inherent control of the cultural role of artistic practice - that bohemianism has consistently asserted the creatively autonomous nature of modern art. It's around these problems that the politics of bohemianism's counter-cultural stances have been worked out and fed into the wider culture.

But alongside this has been an area largely neglected by the social history of art: the process of the definition and legitimation of modern, 'professional' artistic practice by the institution of art education. It is in this process that competing definitions and ideologies - between the responsible use-value of art and variations on an Art for Art's Sake theme, between 'inner' passivity and a sense of wider cultural activism, and between conventionalism and capricious creativity - have confronted each other most visibly in the inherent 'generation gap' nature of capitalist social relations of art. Because the institutional formation of art education and training has historically carried both the conventional and the unconventional, because the art school has been the repository of both the dominant, bourgeois stress on the cultural applicability of art and the Romantic, bohemian emulation of the dynamics of capitalist culture in the stress on constant innovation and change, the tensions and contradictions of the modern artistic experience have been carried forward and continually redefined. As we shall see, the art school has been the forum where the creative dream and the avant-garde wish have confronted the reality of modern art's essential class and cultural marginality. The art school is where the young hopeful, nurtured in a culture ostensibly stressing the Romantic, certainly the 'romanticised' view of artistic practice learns that his or her most likely fate is membership of a vast artistic lumpen-proletariat.

What follows this institutional history is a re-assessment of the particular institutional forms of the late '60s British counter-culture: an analysis which locates the hippie expressive form in the trajectory of bohemianism but which attempts to go beyond the strained level of metaphor and analogy which has characterised and limited other accounts drawing historical parallels between Romanticism, bohemianism and the counter-culture. My basic contention is that the realities of the counter-cultural style can only be made sense of in terms of the cultural experience of artistic practice; that the motifs, ideology and attempts at cultural redefinition can only be understood in terms of the institutional location in which they arise and at which they are directed; and that the counter-culture's essential class location revolves around problems of art's class and cultural marginality.

The thesis, then, is ultimately and unashamedly as much about the history of bohemianism as it is concerned with making discoveries and revelations about the intricacies of hippie ideology; while it is not intended as a 'definitive' social history of art, it is as much about the institutional forms in which the practice and meaning of art has been historically set as about celebrating the wonders and idiocies of the hippie moment. The central premise of the hippie counter-culture was that an aesthetic revolution was both possible and desirable; that to restate in modernised form the traditional demands of a Romantic avant-garde could reshape the realities of wider cultural and social practice. If avant-gardism has been one of the factors contributing to art's cultural marginality,

the counter-culture ignored this historical process and attempted, once again, to make forms of artistic expression central, crucial, and at the forefront of the contemporary cultural experience. This stress can be seen in two of the hippies' main attempts at cultural redefinition: their forays into the medium of the press with, most notoriously and successfully, OZ and International Times; and their attempts to restyle music production and consumption. These are two of the ways the hippie 'solution' to the problem of reconciling artistic expression and cultural meaning were most significantly worked through.

The Left's put-downs have usually got it wrong: if the hippies were 'selfish' and 'individualistic' it was not because these qualities were drawn from their middle-class parents (or 'parent culture' in the language of the Centre) - it was because they have always been at least implicit in the nature of an artistic practice out of which elements of the late 1960s counter-culture arose and into which its cultural critiques, redefinitions and 'solutions' flowed.

My emphasis in what follows certainly makes sense of my own experience as a member of the 1960s aesthetic counter-culture: it also, I believe, offers a deeper, more realistic, more historical account of the emergence of a cultural style. It's not a reasonable assumption to expect every practising sociologist of youth culture to have been a mod or a skinhead or a hippie; personal biographies tend not to work in such a direction. Which is a shame.

Notes and References: Introduction.

1. Hauser, 1962 vol.3, p.162
2. The 'capitalist artistic experience' referred to throughout this text is generally, with a few notable exceptions, that centred on the visual arts. Broadly speaking, the history of literary and poetic production, with its whimsical and angst-ridden moments of bohemian refusal, lacks the institutional base of the visual arts in which competing ideologies are carried in a more or less coherent form. It certainly lacks the strength of wider cultural debate centred on art's use-value and responsibilities. Nobody expects poets not to be eccentric, whereas capitalist culture, as we'll see, has often placed rigid demands on visual artists. But also, the visual arts carry the romance and mystery of notions of creativity and artistic intensity to a more profound degree: everybody at sometime has thought they could manipulate language (write that play, scribble that meaningful poetry, hack out that best-selling novel) - few people, mercifully, think they can manipulate brushes and paint.
3. Geldzahler, The Art Audience and the Critic, in Battcock, 1973, p.50
4. Alloway, 1982

CHAPTER ONE

> It is the acid of profane cultures which eats away the bourgeois scales from the commonplace.
>
> Paul Willis, Profane Culture.

The category of sub-culture, as applied to the study of youth's activities, was developed in the criminological studies of the Chicago School. Its most significant development, though, certainly in terms of the intention of this work, was the concept's elaboration and reformulation in 1950s American sociology - central to this theoretical rejuvenation being Cohen's Delinquent Boys: The Culture of the Gang. Published in 1955, the text was an attempt to explain adolescent male gangs in terms of their actions being 'shared solutions' to collectively experienced 'problems': essentially, for Cohen, the problems of emotional and social adjustment experienced by the young working-class male in his confrontation with an alien, predominantly middle-class value and normative system. The dominant culture of 1950s 'Middle America', with its strict, rigid emphasis on material prosperity, status achievement and 'getting on', conflicted with, in a way which could only frustrate subsequent expectations and behaviour, the cultural background of the working-class youth. Gangs, viewed from this standpoint, were collective, usually deviant expression of this frust-

ration: they were constructed as a solution to adolescents' failure in the pursuit of acceptable, middle-class social and cultural goals.

This stress on the working-class youth's problematical assimilation to the dominant cultural system was continued by Cloward and Ohlin. Posing the delicate question of deviant motivation, they argued, in contrast to earlier criminological 'classics', that such delinquent sub-cultural solutions as Cohen had charted were 'alienated responses': negative reactions (rather than, as Thrasher for instance had earlier argued, positive 'attractions' towards criminality and deviance) away from more conventional solutions in the face of an 'impossible problem of cultural adjustment.

Both of the above represented substantial critiques of psychological and pathological explanations of adolescent crime then widespread in law, the media and throughout public ideology. The authors saw delinquency as having cultural and to a lesser, far more implicit degree class roots. They also saw youth deviancy as being, albeit negatively and by consequence rather than intent, culturally oppositional to the dominant, mainstream cultural conventions of Affluent America. Deviance, youth delinquency was a reaction to the working-class male youth's troubled experience of American society.

By way of contrast, David Matza and Graham Sykes, writing contemporaneously with Cloward and Ohlin, suggested that perhaps delinquent responses and solutions were not so

unconventional, deviant and oppositional as supposed. Weren't delinquent kids, in their aggressive search for kicks, their eschewal of formal working careers, merely expressing openly the values sublimated in the wider, ostensibly more conventional society? Moreover, can't such values - like unrepressed hedonism, extracting the maximum amount of excitement from 'doing nothing' - also be seen as the foundations of a traditional leisure class's mode of existence? Matza and Sykes were confronting a problem I will raise again later - one which has proved the core concern of sub-cultural theories of youth: just what is the real nature of the 'deviant' adolescent response. Their own analysis veered away from the precepts established by Cohen and Cloward and Ohlin: constructed around a central concept of generation rather than a loosely-defined notion of class, it was predicated upon the shared problem of age as the determining force of deviant actions:

> All adolescents at all class levels are to some extent members of a leisure class, for they move in limbo between earlier parental domination and future integration with the social structure through the bonds of work and marriage.(1)

With Matza and Sykes, then, sub-cultural theory itself deviated from established precedent: pondering in their conclusion why some adolescents convert 'subterranean values into seriously deviant behaviour while others do not', they alter the focus of sociological attention, the nature of the basic experience of youth's 'problem situation'.

Sub-cultural theory steered a further tangential

course with the sympathetic, and no doubt personally informed study of drugtakers and jazz musians in Howard Becker's Outsiders. With a general argument developed around the social labelling of certain acts as deviant - that, effectively, deviance is 'created' by dominant social and cultural groups in reaction to the 'generalised symbolic value' of particular modes of behaviour - Becker then constructs two distinct sub-cultural models.

He again sees sub-cultures developing as a collective solution to commonly experienced problems. At the most fundamental level, a deviant sub-culture arises when a group, facing a problem linked in the first instance with their adoption of one particular, defined-as-deviant trait, collectively contrives a solution visibly distinct from the commonly acceptable, conventional patterns of behaviour.

We must, Becker states, study all the interactions involved in this process of sub-cultural creation: the deviant act or value itself; the actors' perceptions of social reality and their experienced 'problem situation'; the response of agencies of normative definition and social control; and the subsequent career of the formed sub-culture. But within this general theoretical framework, Becker utilises two distinct analytical models in reviewing the development of musician and marihuana sub-cultures. He argues, echoing Matza and Sykes, that there is a submerged strain of deviant impulse running through us all - we may all, for example, experience the desire to smoke marihuana and slip into the subterranean leisure world, but it's the mark of the 'normal' person that he or

she suppresses this inclination, recoiling in fear of the legal and social consequences. The marihuana smoker, by definition, refuses to suppress such urges, and by not yielding to social and legal imperatives, by committing over a period an act labelled deviant, the smoker becomes inexorably drawn into a more generalised deviant career:

> Treating a person as though he were generally rather than specifically deviant produces a self-fulfilling prophecy. It sets in motion several mechanisms which conspire to shape the person in the image people have of him. (2)

The deviant's reluctance to adhere to the rules of the wider society, expressed through the continued devotion to the deviant activity, effectively closes, through the act's 'generalised symbolic value', options open to the 'normal', non-deviant person. The foundations are therefore laid for the creation of a full-blown socially-deviant sub-culture: a sub-culture whose members may, at first, have only their initial deviance in common (a predilection for the arguably substantial joys of marihuana), but which becomes, through the shared experience of a common problem, the catalyst for shared solutions and common worldviews.

The marihuana-based sub-culture, then, arises as a direct consequence of more or less repressive social reaction to a specific deviant trait: the smoker, except at the point of initial indulgence, is helpless in the grip of external forces conspiring to shape his or her more general life experience. The smoker is an 'outsider' of the book's title, but he or she - and for these writers it's usually 'he' - is one by cultural imposition and legal consequence, not

through choice.

In contrast, the jazz musician follows a more purposeful, chosen path to a deviant career. The nature of playing and appreciating jazz music demands the artist, Becker argues, to create an enforced but consciously chosen isolation from the perceived philistinism of the uninitiated and the untalented:

> The musician is conceived of as an artist who possesses a mysterious gift setting him apart from all other people. Possessing this gift, he should be free from control by outsiders who lack it. (3)

The musician cub-culture embodies, to a far greater degree than its marihuana-orientated counterpart, clear elements of material interest (the informal but rigidly hierarchical network of job 'contact'), but it is primarily constructed as a supporting pillar for the musicians in their rejection of the values and realities of the wider society. A profound contempt for the world of 'squares' results in a mental and often physical distancing from the 'straight', commercial world; an attitude of contempt for the 'art public', the non-art world and the philistine which, as I shall demonstrate later, possesses an impressive pedigree and a lasting pertinence.

But the musician sub-culture, although formally 'within the law', being often stylistically bizarre will again provoke an 'outsider' label. In a manner similar to the marihuana sub-culture, the 'generalised symbolic value' of the musician lifestyle will attract adverse social reaction, but this must be seen as a consequence of the initial, intentional distancing from society of the musicians them-

selves.

American sociology in this period, then, peered at youth in the supposed 'age of affluence', acknowledged its tendency towards delinquency and criminality, and then attempted to explain its new visibility and expressive form in terms of various modified brands of sub-cultural theory. In common is the shared stress on culture as 'problem solving': in making sense of youth in sub-cultural terms, the initial focus must be the ways youth itself 'makes sense' of its problematical and eventful trajectory through its institutional and material settings. But differences appear certainly over the tentative, subdued emphasis on the possible class nature of the shared experience.

For Cohen, and Cloward and Ohlin, working-class youth's rendezvous with the institutions of dominant America produces an experienced frustration resulting in specific patterns of cultural conflict: youth's delinquency expresses the disjunction between dominant ideologies and the real situation and realisable expectations of working-class adolescents. Matza and Sykes were sceptical of any theory which rested upon a view of culture, whether dominant or subordinate, as homogeneous and unified. Youth's problems cut across simplistically constructed class divisions (how do we account for middle-class youth's delinquency?); its problems are rooted in the opaque sphere of leisure; its solutions invoke the subterranean values that co-exist parallel to society's conventional value and normative structures.

But the more subtle difference lies at what could be called the existential level of the youth, deviant experience.

It's this style of questioning which informs Becker's Outsiders. Little concerned with the specific problems encountered by youth, his analysis ranges, subtly but not without a sense of ambiguity, over the wider areas involved in cultural and sub-cultural creation. But as interesting as Becker's reflections on the nature of the artistic experience and inclination remain - and his ideas on the aesthetics of sub-cultural generation and the bohemian mode of artistic production and leisure styles are usually ignored in the concentration on his labelling theory - his significance here must be the two styles of explanation. On the one hand the unconscious and the socially determined, on the other the chosen and the consciously created and articulated. The importance of Becker in the history of sub-cultural theory is he raises the question of choice and the degree of conscious creativity in the basic formative level of the sub-cultural experience.

Sub-cultural theory made its most telling transatlantic crossing in the mid-sixties with David Downes' The Delinquent Solution. Being at once a review of existing literature and an attempt to test the applicability of sub-cultural theory in a distinctly British setting, Downes' conclusions now seem mildly equivocal, even downbeat by comparison with their American antecedents. As if sublimely isolated from the surrounding cultural forces demanding and celebrating unrestrained hedonism in affluent, 'swinging' Britain, Downes' prose remains geared to the austerity of the British socio-

logical tradition.

But despite any reservations about lyrical presentation, the text provides pertinent warnings about the wholesale importation of American sub-cultural theory. Cloward and Ohlin's emphasis on 'alienation', together with Cohen's similarly constructed reduction of the delinquent problem to 'status frustration' are both received unfavourably when applied to the 'English experience'; such concepts must be rejected because, Downes argues, the adolescent working-class male in England is 'dissociated' from the demands of the dominant cultural system long before he is placed in a position of having to achieve them. 'The boys' are not frustrated, in Cohen's sense, because they never expect to achieve the material success as emphatically stressed in sixties' Britain as in fifties' America. Their development through the background of the general class culture, and their exposure to the predominantly middle-class values of the education system only effectively equip them with expectations and realisable opportunities in line with those of their parents. And similarly, because this state of dissociation is only partial and specifically focussed - not constituting, Downes states, a total rejection of dominant, or for that matter subordinate worldviews - we cannot apply the blanket concept of alienation: dissociation is generally 'from middle-class dominated institutions, rather than from the total non-working-class society.'

For Downes, dissociation and the subsequent 'delinquent solution' have their roots in the contradictory joint exposure of adolescents to the traditional values of working-

class culture and the overwhelmingly middle-class demands of the education system. And for a more adequate understanding of the nature of the worked-out adolescent solution we must turn to the 'reality of sub-culture' - its basis in leisure:

> While their expressed norms, values and beliefs hardly differed markedly from those of the adult lower working-class, which are essentially conservative, their differential concentration on these norms, etc. in a specifically 'leisured' context warrants the use of the sub-culture concept.....(4)

So although the general orientations of adolescent working-class boys can be explained in terms of their relatively committed adherence to established cultural patterns, their delinquency or deviance lies in a divergence from this background, from their parent culture. With the breakdown of the potency of older, more traditional leisure solutions - a process encouraged by the growth in the late '50s and early '60s of a commercially fostered 'teenage culture' - the adolescent, his propensity for more orthodox creativity stunted by schooling, resorts to a 'creative' illegality to manufacture a meaningful leisure ethos. The 'reality of sub-culture', therefore, resides partly in the re-affirmation of traditional cultural values which sustain the boy in his potentially alienating passage through school and into work. But it must also be located, in its 'sensational', delinquent forms, in the changing face of leisure: 'and it is to this sphere that the "corner boy" displaces his search for achievement from the areas of school and work.'

In the brief history of sub-cultural theory depicted so

far, we have seen two relatively distinct uses of class, its organisation and effects in forming the springboard for the processes of sub-cultural creation. In American sociology, the class structure, where it is acknowledged at all, engenders the deviant sub-culture negatively - as a reaction by working-class youth, to the frustrations of a middle-class, and ultimately alien value system. In Downes we similarly saw the negative, inhibiting effects of middle-class institutions (primarily the school) on the working-class boys: but we also saw the link being made between the nature and expressive form of the delinquent solution, and the values, positive yet problematical, received from a working class parent culture in which the boys appear inescapably immersed. The focus of the processes of youth choice, and the nature and location of the collective 'problem situation' is delicately shifted.

The concept of parent culture that surfaces with Downes is enthusiastically seized by Phil Cohen. But although the terminology of Sub-cultural Conflict and Working-Class Community often appears to parallel that of The Delinquent Solution, the former is an unashamedly more modern text: in the types of youth sub-culture it embraces; in its rhetoric; and, perhaps more significantly, in its theoretical organisation. It is also, on first glance, a far more ambitious text. Although it shares with The Delinquent Solution a similar geographical location for research - the much-studied, run-down communities of East London - Cohen's work travels beyond, in its theoretical scope, the relatively modest limits set in Downes' text to critically assess the realities and mythologies of post-war British society, economy and culture.

The established British sociological conventions of empiricism and interactionism falter and yield in the face of Cohen's rejuvenated form of Marxism: effectively, what is ostensibly a study of youth sub-cultures appears to evolve into a theoretical tract on the ideological structures and forms of political and cultural resistance in sixties' Britain.

Cohen is justifiably sceptical of the ideologies of 'affluence' and 'liberal-democratic consensus' which seemed to preside regally over Britain's turbulent course through the fifties and sixties. Yet while he discards the spectacular, overtly-ideological elements of the 'affluence thesis', Cohen correctly acknowledges the real changes in working-class lifestyles during the period. But if Cohen validates the 'reality of affluence', seen in the increased material prosperity of the working-class in general, his deeper concern, reflecting his empirical research, centres upon the disruption of traditional, locally-based economies, family structures, and working-class communities which accompanied the more overt, beneficial changes. Cohen relocates the sub-cultural discourse on a more wistful, historically-nostalgic level.

The disruptions Cohen depicts - most visible in the widespread, major housing redevelopments - not only substantially fragmented the social and cultural patterns of the established working-class community, they also attacked and threatened the old mechanisms of cultural defence and resistance. Traditional, historically-evolved ways of seeing and experiencing class subordination were diluted by the much-acclaimed, and long-awaited, growth of affluence, and a disorientated working-class was easy prey for the cynical accompanying ideologies

proclaiming 'the end' of all hitherto evils.

While this social and cultural disruption cut deeply across all sections of the working-class community, its effects were particularly severely experienced by the community's male youth. Once accustomed to a settled, easy transition from school into, usually, their fathers' trades, the local boys were thrown into unemployment; forced into leaving the familiar neighbourhood boundaries; or, at best, accepting unfamilar, usually unskilled jobs within the area that the reorganised industrial structure offered.

Cohen's point is essentially that these changed employment prospects, together with more general shifts and dislocations in the family and community, placed the young in a new collective problem situation - a situation not resolvable by recourse to the disintegrating and increasingly anachronistic defences and solutions of the parent culture. This is the point of the introduction of history: the youth subcultures represent a stylised and distinctly 'modern' form of resistance to the problems of working-class youth in the age of affluence. They express, visibly and sensationally, the contradictions running through the parent culture - for example the tense, uneasy adoption of consumerism on the traditional base of working-class puritanism - yet they also attempt to provide workable solutions and new forms of resistance:

> Mods, parkers, skinheads, crombies all represent in their different ways, an attempt to retrieve some of the socially cohesive elements destroyed in the parent culture, and to combine these with elements selected from other class fractions, symbolising one or other of the options confronting it. (5)

Being an ideological, 'magical' solution to real contradictions, experienced as problems through immersion in the parent culture but with roots in the deeper, structural development of post-war British capitalism, the sub-cultural response is doomed to glorious, stylistically symbolic failure. It is from this revised form of sub-cultural theory - in which fresh nuances are added to the use of class, history and ideological resitance - that the sustained and penetrating analysis of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies takes off.

The influence of Resistance through Rituals in forming the dominant current perspectives on youth culture cannot be underestimated. In many ways the apotheosis of formal, sociological sub-cultural theory, its language and concepts have slipped easily into the wider media's youth discourse.

The text opens with the Centre's 'theoretical overview': the definitive conceptual framework for this thoroughly modernised sub-cultural paradigm. It opens conventionally with a series of definitions. Culture, for instance, is defined as 'that level at which social groups develop patterns of life, and give expressive form to their social and material life-experience.' Concise, controlled, and, to the British sociological persuasion, relatively uncontroversial. In that the 'law of society' and the 'law of culture' are in essence synonymous, there are, we are told, dominant and subordinate cultures coressponding to a Marxian dominant/subordinate class distinction. Having studied their Gramsci, and, equally importantly, being conversant with the less than radical realities of post-war British political history, the Centre's writers do not immediately extrapolate sensational

conclusions from this formula. For although the structural relationship between these cultures, the 'cultural dialectic', must necessarily be one of fundamental and irreconcilable opposition, the tension and antagonism, through the processes by which the subordinate class/culture comes to experience itself and social reality in terms defined by the dominant class/culture, is normally under the surafce in a moderately calm, negotiated coexistence.

Following precedent, sub-cultures are defined as sub-sets of the 'larger cultural networks', being differentiated by 'distinctive activities' and specific 'focal concerns', and 'when these tightly-defined groups are also distinguished by age and generation we call them "youth sub-cultures".'

So a correct analysis of youth sub-cultures, then, must incorporate their location firstly in their position within, but also in distinction to their parent culture (the 'larger cultural network'), and secondly their relation to the dominant culture. Put more forcibly, their relation to 'the struggle between dominant and subordinate cultures.' In other words, we must, as sociologists of youth culture, discover the political and cultural oppositional content of our sub-cultures. Cultural resistance through the rituals of youth leisure.

As in Sub-cultural Conflict and Working Class Community, there is a critique of 'the holy trinity of affluence, consensus and embourgeoisement' ideologies: and those commentators - the majority until Cohen's theoretical break - who have sought to explain the visibility and sensationalism of post-war youth culture only by reference to these essentially mythical

constructions are politely but forcibly dismissed. Among those patrons of the science thrown to the wolves for this failing include the American sub-cultural theorists: rejected because, unedrlying their elaborated concepts of 'alienation' and 'status frustration' lurked the spectre of society-as-consensus. Their proffered 'class model' fails because of the inadequacy of its construction: based on, and tacitly eulogising the outdated and false ideological vision of the 'American Dream'.

For the Centre, the true sociological meaning of 'affluence' in post-war Britain is simultaneously 'real' and 'ideological': its reality lay in the not inconsiderable improvement in working-class life experience in the late '50s and early '60s compared to the austere days of 1945-54 and the depressed bleakness of the 1930s; its ideological nature - the reasons why it 'assumed the proportions of a full-blown ideology' - resided in the still very considerable disjunction between the promises contained in the idea and the real, material situation of the bulk of the working-class. A working-class which, following Phil Cohen, is seen as having had its established cultural and political strategies disrupted in the wake of changes in the productive system:

> What mattered, therefore, was <u>not</u> the passive re-making of the working-class <u>in</u> the 'affluent' image, but the dislocations it produced - and the responses it provoked. (6)

Enter the ghost of Gramsci. The battle of hegemony, Gramsci's term for the legitimation of class rule through a 'spontaneous' and 'natural' acceptance by the subordinate class of the authority and right to govern of the dominant class, is

fought on 'the terrain of the superstructures: the institutions of civil society and the state....' The tactics of this battle require the constant 'winning of space' from the opposing side's cultural territory - always in conflict, the relations between a dominant and subordinate culture historically represent negotiated resistance to the advances and forays of the opposition. Resistance which at specific historical moments results in a direct challenge by the working-class to the exercise of hegemonic domination, or, with the irony we often expect in studying working-class history, the further adaptation and incorporation of its institutions into the capitalist political, cultural and economic mainstream. And in this context, the Centre maintains, we must locate the post-war rise of youth sub-cultures:

> Working-class sub-cultures....take shape on the level of the social and cultural class-relations of the subordinate classes. In themselves, they are not simply 'ideological' constructs. They, too, win space for the young: cultural space in the neighbourhood and institutions, real time for leisure and recreation, actual room on the street or street-corner. (7)

Working-class sub-cultures, then, are once again collective attempts at solving a 'problem situation'. But for the Centre this initial experienced situation is defined in rigid class terms: the sub-culture's stylised, ritualised and overwhelmingly symbolic 'solution' is positively addressing the compound 'class problematic' of the parent culture. Their own cultural practices, derided and often reviled, express resistance and create age-specific strategies that reflect the material and ideological contradictions of

the 'larger cultural networks' within which they are located.

But because such 'solutions' are constructed on a symbolic level they leave untouched and unresolved the 'real', concrete problems they are at root addressing. As the authors accurately state:

> There is no 'sub-cultural career' for the working-class lad, no 'solution' in the sub-cultural milieu, for problems posed by the key structuring experiences of the class. (8)

Yet although the essential problem experience is rooted in the cultural framework of the parent class/culture, there remains the additional problem of youth: the negotiation of the problem areas of school, 'into work', and leisure. Areas that threw up problems and dangers for youth in the fifties and sixties of a markedly different kind to those experienced by their parents. And of the three areas mentioned, youth's most conspicuous success at problem-solving has been in the sphere of leisure. Youth has consistently won cultural space on the less-disciplined (than school or work) terrain of the disposal of 'free time'. In the face of encounters with the ubiquitous problem of 'passing time', with its 1960s specificities - the real increase in free time, the growth of a teenage consumption market, the popular equation of youth with 'having a good time', the rise of the new leisure institutions - working-class youth came to develop an age-group identity:

> Here we begin to see how forces working right across a class, but differently experienced as between generations, may have formed the basis for generating an outlook - a kind of consciousness - specific to age position: a <u>generational consciousness</u>. (9)

This, for the Centre, is the reality underlying the rise of working-class youth sub-cultures. But how does modernised sub-cultural theory cope with the problems and solutions of middle-class youth? And how, more specifically, does the concept of resistance through rituals apply to the idea of the middle-class counter-culture: where 'counter', in more everyday discourse, equals a more widely pervasive 'alternative' rather than resistance from within.

Distinguishing between the differing class sub-cultures presents few difficulties to the Centres trained textual readers. Working-class formations are 'clearly articulated, collective', middle-class 'more individualised'; the working-class models present a clear division between activities based solidly in the domain of the parent culture and those organised around leisure institutions, middle-class sub-cultures 'blur the distinctions between "necessary" and "free" time and activities; the working-class 'appropriate the existing environment' whereas middle-class varieties 'tend to construct enclaves within the interstices of the dominant culture'; working-class sub-cultures offer social opposition and resistance where middle-class sub-cultures construct their rituals of resistance around political opposition.

This last point is certainly worth explaining at greater length:

> Middle-class counter-culture spearheaded a dissent from their own, dominant, 'parent' culture. Their dissafiliation was principally ideological and cultural. They directed their attack mainly against those institutions which reproduce the dominant cultural-ideological relations - the family, education, the media, marriage, the sexual division of

> labour. These are the very apparatuses which manufacture 'attachment' and internalise consent. (10)

But surely these institutions 'manufacture "attachment" and internalise consent' across the social, class spectrum, not just for middle-class youth? Of course the answer is yes, but the significance of experiencing these institutions as a problem, in explaining the emergence of the hippie counter-culture, resides in the relationship between middle-class youth and changes in its own parent culture. The middle-class, it seems was as vulnerable to the effects of post-war capitalist modernisation as was the working-class. But naturally on different terms. Whereas the working-class was suffering the disruption of its cultural strategies in the face of affluence and the dislocation of traditional communities:

> the post-war reorganisation of the technical and productive life of the society, and the unsuccessful attempt to stabilise the mode of production at this more 'advanced' level, had an equally unsettling and 'uneven' impact on middle-class culture. (11)

The 'unsettling' of cultural experience was again organised around the effects of affluence: a condition demanding consumption rather than thrift, and which arrived as a profound shock to the complacent, traditional middle-class 'formed in and by an older, more "protestant" ethic.'

What this means, then, is that like their working-class counterparts, middle-class sub-cultures (and the reference is always essentially to the hippie counter-culture) also arise at the level of disruption and dislocation of values within their parent culture: but a parent culture which is dominant rather than subordinate.

The proof of this differential class/parent culture background is given by Paul Willis in Profane Culture, the Centre's most extravagant text on the hippie sub-cultural formation:

> The main difference between the cultures is, of course, in their locating parent cultures. The motor-bike boys were broadly from the working-class, and the hippies broadly from the middle-class. (12)

The hippie counter-culture was composed of capitalism's chosen sons and daughters, the direct heirs to cultural hegemony. Thus their own rituals of resistance arise from within the parameters of the dominant class: they must be seen as expressing a crisis within the hegemonic culture rather than as a form of opposition against it from outside. The cusp of contradictions provoking their emergence is at the level of the youth-supportive function of vastly increased wealth and effort poured into the 'formation of consciousness itself', and the radical dislocations this produced in the 1960s within the middle-class as a youth parent culture. The products of the 'best' in education, their resistance was organised against its ideologies and effects; benefitting from the 'best' of family life, they criticised the form and organisation of the family. Against the values of sobriety held by their parent culture the hippies offered 'permissiveness'. As a recent Open University reader, clearly heavily under the influence of Centre theory, suggests:

> Dominant culture was thus thrown into its own internal division and crisis....Indeed the counter-culture indexed a severe rupture within the hegemonic ideology through the subversive critiques and practices of permissiveness. (13)

A premise of this thesis, however, is that the simple class-reductionism of the Centre's account of the hippie counter-culture, like its account of working-class youth sub-cultures, is misplaced and misconceived. Introducing the concerns of history and ideology and a Marxist terminology of class into the sub-cultural theoretical discourse is indeed a commendable exercise: but we are left pondering quite what history, what theory of ideology and cultural production, and what system of class relations is being introduced. Accounting for sub-cultural styles of 'resistance' is a more complex enterprise than Resistance through Rituals would lead its many readers to believe. A reliance on the blanket concept of 'parent culture' is no more a substitute for historical investigation than a recourse to sociological platitudes about modes of educational disaffection is for seeing how such processes work: I would argue that the experienced vicissitudes of the education system certainly are significant in the development of the counter-cultural style, the hippie moment of the late sixties, but I would argue that the interweaving of experience, ideologies and contrived cultural expressivity demands a more substantial, deeper probing than the Centre's patronising brevity.

But for the moment I would transfer the discussion away from youth and sub-cultural style towards certain problems in the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies' construction and use of the concept of culture itself: to coin a cliché, from fundamentally unsound foundations, unsteady monoliths of misunderstanding flourish.

Resistance through Rituals, to its credit, resists the temptation to trivialise the concept of culture: it does not reduce the concept's application to the level of aesthetics, art and leisure; it is not concerned with offering criteria differentiating between 'high' and 'low' culture; nor does it indulge in the often sterile form of debate about 'mass culture' and 'mass society'. The Centre's cultural theory is more subtle, optimistic and celebratory.

What is lacking from over-determined accounts of culture, and what appears to distinguish the Centre's model by its very inclusion, is an emphasis on the importance of a consciously-articulated process of cultural production and creativity: that culture, on whatever scale, does not descend smoothly from the laps of the gods or the bourgeoisie....it is actively made. So although, following the general Marxist theoretical tradition, we are constrained to see the subordinate class, in and through its culture, as generally experiencing itself in ways broadly defined by the dominant class and culture, within this framework a subordinate class possesses opportuinities for cultural creativity and expression of the opposition inherent in the 'cultural dialectic'.

The 'making' of culture, and therefore beneath this the generation of sub-cultures, rests within the confines of this 'cultural dialectic' - arising from the usually considerable disjunction or contradiction between the ideologies of life and ways of seeing disseminated by the dominant culture, and their 'fit' with the real, material life experience of the subordinate class. There's a familiar and comforting ring to Richard Johnson's definition of culture, extracted

from the more recently published Centre tract, Working Class Culture: Studies in History and Theory:

> It is important to retain 'culture' as a category of analysis. By culture is understood the common sense or way of life of a particular class, group or social category, the complex of ideologies that are actually adopted as moral preferences or principles of life....Ideologies always work upon a ground: that ground is culture. (14)

As we've already seen, such correspondence as exists between ideology and experience is always far from complete (the cracks in the rendering of the capitalist cultural wall require constant and liberal applications of refined grout!), and from this underlying matrix of social and economic contradictions - in that the 'law of society' and the 'law of culture' are one and the same - a colourful heritage of cultural responses and strategies. A lived tradition, in authentic Thompsonian dialect, of patterns of both refusal and acceptance, resistance and compromise, material advance and ideological atrophy.

Working-class youth sub-cultures - generationally and stylistically discrete but nonetheless unable to extricate themselves from the fabric of the wider ways of life, responses and strategies of the parent culture - emerge from this historically fertile tapestry.

And we can instantly see that the task of the student of sub-culture, post-Cohen's theoretical breakthrough, embraces wide and exciting horizons. No longer recorders of sensational cultural angst and despair, he or she celebtrates the modernised responses arising from the confluence of jointly-inapplicable 'solutions' offered by the parent and dominant cultures.

One must seize initially upon a stylistically separate youth sub-culture and pose the problems: why did the material and ideological solutions offered by the opposing cultures fail?; what are the real conditions and experiences that should provoke such visibly extravagant responses?; is there a firm level of correspondence between the actual style of this response and the material and ideological terrain on which the sub-culture is generated?

The first problem for the sceptic is whether Centre theory in fact answers these questions satisfatorily and consistently. The second problem is whether such questions are even the correct ones to pose in the not inconsiderable task of making sense of youth culture.

The Centre's theoretical consistency certainly appears tight. Commenting on the 'cultural autonomy' of youth in post-war Britain, John Clarke loyally echoes the earlier thesis:

> ...this autonomy of working-class youth cannot in any sense be taken as a severing of youth from class: rather, youth sub-cultural formations are elaborated on the terrain of class cultures but through the mechanisms of 'generational specificity'. The stylistic and symbolic repertoires of sub-cultures such as the Teds, Mods and Skinheads are cultural representations of the class's conditions of existence, and the changes taking place in them, but the representations are articulated through the position of youth within the class. (15)

And again, Paul Willis in Profane Culture stresses Centre theory's dual emphasis on the wider cultural, genetic location of sub-cultures, and the making of their own, more resticted solutions and strategies:

> Their located forms of creativity were taking

> what is radical and nascent in their parent cultures, developing and delivering them in concrete ways - ways which themselves carry and live out great political significance. This was the distinctive form of what we can think of as their cultural politics. (16)

The problem for the Centre's theory of cultural practice is the ways in which the 'cultural representations of the class's conditions of existence' are articulated through the sub-cultural formation; the ways in which 'what is radical and nascent in their parent cultures' is transformed into the sub-cultural form of 'cultural politics'. This is the first problem of consistency; and it centres on the ostensibly central concept of experience.

Recalling the definition in the opening theoretical overview of Resistance through Rituals we will remember that culture is essentially the 'expressive form' given to 'social and material life-experience'. And with this I would concur. But the problem is that this quality of experience, upon which the whole of the Centre's elaborate cultural theory would appear to constructed, enjoys only a tenuous and ambiguous existence in the text's actual theoretical and ethnographic formation. And by the time the theoretical overview of Working Class Culture is reached it has vanished.

What this latter text illustrates, through its sustained attacks on the 'culturalism' of Williams and Thompson, is an explicit desire for a more positive, more structured relationship between underlying economic realities and the phenomenal world of culture. And the stumbling block to such a revised relation appears to be the troubling realm of experience.

The point is made by the Centre's ex-director, Stuart Hall, in an assessment of Thompson's controversial anti-Althusserian polemic, The Poverty of Theory:

> ....there is no way in which the category of 'experience' can be unproblematic for Marxism. All experience is penetrated by cultural and ideological categories. It cannot be simply 'read' for its true meaning: it must be interrogated for its complex interweaving of 'real' and ideological elements. (17)

A statement against Resistance through Rituals and its claimed emphasis on experience? A move signifying some newly-fired fervour of theoretical cleansing, in which 'experience' appears not so much restricted in scope of application as purged totally and irreversibly from the repertoire of available concepts? Certainly by the time Working Class Culture is encountered, the Centre seems little concerned with the conscious questioning, through experience, of material situations and ideological flows upon which cultures (and sub-cultures) are supposedly contingent; reversed, despite occasional protestations to the opposite, is the commitment to common sense worldviews and their power in the sub-cultural, youthful domain.

What remains is exhortations to discover 'a wider analysis of economic and social structures', to lay bare the bones of political economy which culture, and of course the parasite of bourgeois cultural studies, only appears to obfuscate and mystify. And this plea contains remarkable *corollaries - not* least of which is the carefully worded but nonetheless extraordinary rebuttal buried deep in Working Class Culture:

> ....some tendencies in modern sociology, focussing especially on the symbolic oppositions of groups of young working-class men do parallel Thompson's

> own stress on crowd actions, rituals of protest and moments of exceptional popular excitement and communal mobilisation. The point is that we can only reach a proper assessment of the character of such moments - then and now - by placing them within a wider analysis of economic and social structures. (18)

This gentle critical observation, not enough to send an enraged Stuart Hall to attack Richard Johnson's office door, is symptomatic of a developed concern with the 'old ways'.

There is obviously no obligation on the part of one Centre text to follow directly and unquestioningly in the footsteps of another: the point of including the above snippets of autocritique is that they attribute to 'some tendencies in modern sociology' qualities it lacks in the first place - the drift into the uncompromising and closed landscape of the anti-empiricism, neo-Althusserian sentiments of Working Class Culture can only suprise those readers whose perceptions were dulled by the comforting assurances to staid English sensibilties found in the opening chapter of Resistance through Rituals.

This point of theoretical objection can be more readily understood by reference back to the Centre's confrontation with American sub-cultural theory: a sociological mode dismissed, essentially, for its sublime ignorance of the complex problem of ideology, and its own ideologically-tinged weak definition of class relations. For where Centre theory claims to offer a significant advance over these earlier theorists now condemned to the expansive wastes of the dustbin of history, is in the resplendent 'modernism' of the language and concepts of sub-culture. Stripped of its overwhelmingly 1950s

ideological overtones and language, and relocated firmly in the eclectic world of current sociological discourse, the body of theory is transformed, following Cohen's 'epistemological break', in the image of a Marxist dialogue. Again this can only be a commendable exercise. But the problem is that what Centre theory appears to do is substitute Marxist-orientated concepts of class, ideology and the state for the language of functionalism and interactionism and arrive, in Resistance through Rituals at least, at strikingly similar conclusions: that working-class males - and again the analysis is centred on male youth culture - are deprived, alienated and socially powerless. This is another side of the 'reality of sub-culture' as I shall show when the Centre's theory of style is worked through more fully in the next chapter: working-class males gain collective compensation for a collectively-experienced 'problem situation' - through a culturally-symbolic identity - in youth, deviant sub-cultures. And although there is more than an element of truth in this form of argument - that the realities of youth culture lie at least partly somewhere within the realms of the assertion of identity - the theoretical break appears not as staggering as assumed.

Yet it is in the conceptual modernisation, in the linguistic restructuring that seeks to escape the conclusions of a bourgeois sociology of yesteryear, that the pitfalls lie. Where, in short, cultural studies encounters the problem of experience with a view to erasing the mistakes of the mere cultural historians. For we cannot divorce culture from its material, its social and economic setting. In consequence, the familiar

words of Marx that ring out on page 10 of Resistance through Rituals are particularly apposite:

> As individuals express their life, so they are. What they are, therefore, coincides with their production, both with what they produce, and with how they produce.

Culture, as a useful 'category of analysis', must therefore have its correct historical and material settings restored. It remains the 'symbolic orderings of social life', but it displays its true sociological location in the mesh of 'social' class and 'social' productive relationships which constitute the totality of the social system. Thus the 'experiences' made sense of and symbolically ordered are always, in the final analysis if not before, those born of such historically structured social and economic relationships.

Such a general setting is, of course, the cornerstone of any Marxist cultural theory. But where the theory of cultural expressivity contained in Resistance through Rituals appears to deviate from many other 'Marxisms', and hence where much of its attraction lies, is the level of conscious creativity and relatively autonomous self-determination - in other words the power of agency - it appears to offer in the process of the structuring of experience in cultural expression. And this is where we again encounter youth-subcultures.

The post-war emergence of youth sub-cultures coincides with the breakdown of traditional working-class cultural patterns and strategies in this wider cultural network's tense altercations with the demands of the developing capitalist economy. Out of this tangled web of bewildering and, at a

structural level contradictory material experiences and ideologies, the youth sub-cultures evolve to articulate through their own symbolic transformations newly personalised and consciously autonomous solutions and cultural strategies. Again, Resistance through Rituals appears to grant to the process of cultural and sub-cultural generation the key component of conscious creativity. From the (radical or subtle) divorce between ideologies purporting to 'explain' the social world and the actual experience of material reality, through a questioning of dominant ideologies and false world-views, truer-to-experience cultural solutions are worked out and articulated.

Of course, returning to the principles of Marx's equation, an individual's position in the social structure limits the arenas of potential practical activity, which in turn shape and colour both his or her experience of the world and the relative applicability of ideologies seeking to explain it. But this is not to deny a sense of redressed balance in the new cultural dialectic: we're led back to the active domain of culture and youth sub-cultures, and the prospect of cultural politics. Back, in fact, to Thompson:

> ....at 'experience' we were led on to re-examine all those dense, complex and elaborated systems by which familial and social life is structured and social consciousness finds realisation and expression.....All of which, in their sum, comprise the 'genetics' of the whole historical process, all of them joined, at a certain point, in common human experience, which itself (as distinctive class experiences) exerts its pressure on the sum. (19)

And it is through its commonly-contrived and commonly-held attempts at changing the use and meaning of cultural objects

and practices that youth sub-cultures, as we shall discover in the next chapter, 'exerts its pressure on the sum'.

The above, I believe, is consistent with the opening shots of Resistance through Rituals' detailed disclosures on youth, even when modified by reference to subsequent texts. Or perhaps I should say it is how the text reads in its intention.

But is it consistent with the later readings of sub-cultural style; when the premises of the theoretical overview are applied to the 'empirical' study of youth? Why I believe it is not may become clearer if I reintroduce Howard Becker.

Becker, as I argued earlier, utilised two distinct theoretical sub-cultural models in Outsiders. Firstly, in his depiction of the marihuana smoking milieu, there is the tendency to view sub-cultural creation as unconscious; as inarticulate in its cultural voice, and determined essentially by forces external, and always outside the control of the actors themselves. Except in the initial act of indulgence, the marihuana smoker is carried along in the wake of a current of processes and forces of creation and definition over which he has little or no effective control.

In the case of the jazz musician, however, the situation is virtually reversed. In this vignette, the sub-culture is depicted as arising intentionally as a consequence of deeply-held artistic convictions: the musicians consciously and purposefully act upon ideologies of what constitutes 'good music', suitable audience reaction, and a concomitant lifestyle, and articulate a stylistically-distinctive and materially-

supportive sub-culture accordingly. Jazz musicians consistently and consciously question dominant ideologies of work and leisure, taste and style - their sub-culture, in a way apparently paralleling the model presented in Resistance through Rituals, articulates and expresses the cultural contradictions inherent in the relation between the artistic 'persuasion' and lifestyle and its enforced and unhappy location in a society that simultaneously trivialises art and treats it as just another commodity. The musician, in his reaction to these conflicting ideological stresses, exploits the spaces in the wider cultural system to create a solution that makes sense, as a way of life, of his own inclinations, values and material situation.

The declared aim of Centre theory, in deed if not exact terminological and conceptual replication, is an overall alignment with this second model. Just as my own later excursions into the social history of art, the art education experience, and the aesthetics of cultural practice will yield similar conclusions in my re-evaluation of the hippie counter-culture's historical moment.

Unfortunately for the Centre's declared aims, though, its practice reduces to a position closer in theoretical style to Becker's first, inarticulate and unconscious perspective. For what is lacking from Centre theory's youth 'readings', again despite arguments to the contrary, is an adherence to the idea of culture (and thus also youth sub-cultures) arising at the level of contradiction between ideology and the actual experience of social reality.

As I shall demonstrate shortly, the contradictions expressed and 'magically' resolved by the working-class youth sub-cultures on display in Resistance through Rituals and the other texts I will discuss are not of the same order and nature as those 'solutions' detailed in Becker's jazz musician model. Nowhere in the Centre's theory of these working-class strategies is there a discernible acknowledgement of potential or actual counter-positions - definite alternative ideologies expressing a questioning of dominant values. What remains is the helpless carrier or bearer of externally imposed contradictions found to a perhaps forgiveable extent in Becker's marihuana model and found notoriously in the Althusserian tradition of cultural theory. Sub-cultures are formations which can only meekly resist the flow of history; they are always a determined response, a stylistically resplendent but nonetheless negative reaction.

And although the social forces that provoke and mould the sub-cultural response are unravelled in Centre theory, for working-class youth itself they remain mysterious and deeply unconscious in their assimilation. They lie not at the level of experience, of realisation and conscious practical activity, but in the 'reality' of 'structures', dark forces and blind reflex action - somewhere at 'the intersection between the located parent culture and the mediating institutions of the dominant culture.'(20)

This is a social 'reality' of culture which never rises above the ineluctable level of the economic structure: the 'questions' which should form the central axis of cultural

creativity, according to the prescription, are asked for the working-class parent culture by the system of productive relations, the parent culture dutifully responds, and from this matrix the ideologically saturated youth sub-cultures 'magically' emerge. The dramas of youth sub-culture acted out in Resistance through Rituals and its attendant texts appear no less determined than the disgraced portrayals of earlier, more openly 'sociological' forms of youth and deviancy theory. Without labouring what could become an irrelevant critique, the problem for Centre theory is that as it unfolds 'empirical youth' becomes an endangered species - likely to be rendered extinct beneath the grander and more profound concerns and vistas of political economy. If empiricism (21) is expunged totally from the theoretical armoury - through a real or imagined fear of its possible crudities and excesses - in favour of a 'high theoreticism' the risk is always there of, to quote the old aphorism, throwing out the baby with the bathwater. As Dick Hebdige honestly admits, in a text that openly reveals its substantial debts to Centre theory, 'it is highly unlikely....that members of any of the sub-cultures described in this book would recognise themselves reflected here.' (22) Even the modicum of 'theoretical' 'creativity' permitted in the generation of sub-cultural style is far from unproblematical: a problem towards which I shall now turn.

Notes and References: Chapter One

1. Matza and Sykes, 1961, p.718
2. Becker, 1973, p.34
3. ibid., p.86
4. Downes, 1966, p.257
5. Cohen, 1972, p.23
6. Hall, Clarke, Jefferson and Roberts, Subcultures, Cultures and Class, in Hall & Jefferson (eds), 1976, p.37
7. ibid., p.45
8. ibid., p.47
9. ibid., p.51
10. ibid., p.62
11. ibid., p.63
12. Willis, 1978, p.8
13. Middleton and Muncie, 1981, p.91
14. Johnson, Three Problematics, in Clarke, Critcher and Johnson, 1979, p.234
15. Clarke, Capital and Culture, in Clarke, Critcher and Johnson, 1979, p.242
16. Willis, op.cit., p.171
17. Hall, 1980
18. Johnson, op.cit., p.224
19. Thompson, 1978, pp.362/3
20. Clarke, Hall et al., op.cit., p.53
21. A term used here in rough accord with its usage in Clarke, Lovell, McDonnell, Robins and Seidler, 1980, p.5:

> the belief that there is no higher basis for knowledge than experience, so that the basis for a critique of capitalist society can only be the experience of the mass of the people oppressed and exploited under capitalism.

In other words a usage where its place, as an 'element of the Marxist tradition', is defended against Althusserian cultural theory

22. Hebdige, 1979, p.139

CHAPTER TWO

> The hippies clearly held up a bold and alternative mode of living. It was predicated on a critique of conventional society. Unfortunately that critique remained silent, and finally, tragically, unorganised. There was no political analysis or expression behind the radical lifestyle.
>
> Paul Willis, Profane Culture.

The point of this thesis is not to offer the definitive critique of the work of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, however much the sociology of culture may need such an effort. But in the field of cultural style, where my interests coincide to an extent with those of the Centre, a further encounter is justified. It's justified in elaborating the inconsistencies of Centre theory, the clash between intention and what is achieved; it's essential to lay the foundations for a more adequate introduction of the concerns of ideology and history into the cluttered field of youth cultural studies.

As has already been stressed, sub-cultures in Resistance through Rituals are represented as attempts to simultaneously assert a degree of expressive autonomy from the parent culture while, paradoxically, their members remain firmly committed to the framework of 'parental identifications' which provide the elements of material and general physical and emotional support.

But working-class and middle-class youth also confronts

(and resists) at first-hand the institutions (school, the police etc.) which mediate the wider dominant/subordinate class/culture relation. And as was seen in the last chapter, it is at this intersection, between such mediating institutions and the 'located parent culture', that the post-war youth sub-cultures have arisen and spectacularly flourished.

In organising their forms of resistance, their collective sub-cultural response to this charged confrontation, youth 'borrows' certain strategies and 'things' from its parent culture. But, significantly, they 'use' them in a way specific to their generational experience and, beyond this, to the influence and focal concerns of their own group life. It's this distinctive use of things (dress, argot etc.) that constitutes the making of the sub-cultural style. The process is, we are told, one of the consciously developed activity of reorganising and redefining what is - for their parents, 'straight' youth and other sub-cultures - the mundane and the commonplace in terms of the 'focal concerns' of the sub-culture: 'an organised group-identity in the form and shape of a coherent and distinctive way of "being-in-the-world".'

This sub-cultural identity-through-style is not, in the activity of its creation, in any sense 'magical': it exhibits the very essence of cultural generation and signification; its own practices rooted deep in the material practices of human, class history.

Of course, this historical and class location places more than negligible constraints on the field and scope of

sub-cultural creativity. But as John Clarke argues in his seminal essay on style, it also locates the real processes of cultural innovation:

> Like Levi-Strauss' myth-bricoleur, the practioner of sub-cultural bricolage is also constrained by the existing meanings of signs within a discourse - the objects, the 'gear' used to assemble a new sub-cultural style must not only already exist, but they must also carry meanings organised into a system coherent enough for their relocation and transformation to be understood as a transformation. There's no point in it, if the new assemblage looks exactly like, carries exactly the same message as, that previously existing. (1)

No point in it indeed: for style is the transformative practice through which sub-sultures establish their specific, individual identities; the symbolic operations through which they make sense of and articulate their generational and class experiences. And with the theoretical setting of sub-cultural style firmly established, the task then becomes one of 'reading' the style, discovering the nuances and meanings, beneath common experience, of the constituted text of the theoretical discourse. As John Clarke states:

> In what follows....we take the existence of a sub-culture for granted, and look instead at how this directs the group to the selective appropriation of symbolic objects from the 'field of possibles' and how the relations and practices of the group then become fixed in terms of the way these 'bits' are organised into a stylistic cluster. (2)

Clarke continues - and in so doing indulges his own, and the Centre's general preilection for dramatically stating the obvious. For we are told that the semantics of stylistic selection, the reasons why sub-cultures subvert the meanings and use of particular commodities and 'things' in preference

to others, breakdown as follows:

> The important point here is that the group must be able to recognise itself in the more or less repressed potential meanings of particular symbolic objects. This requires that the object in question must have the 'objective possibility' of reflecting the particular values and concerns of the group in question as one among the range of potential meanings that it could hold. (3)

This is the homology or 'symbolic fit' of Paul Willis' more opaque terminology: the symbolic, stylistic connection between the objects used (and their subsequent resignification) and the sub-culture's own values and subjective experience. In other words - and to make the basic circularity of this form of equation more apparent - we can say that sub-cultural style is in essence expressing the sub-cultural experience. This is the simple theoretical conjunction from which the complexities of the Centre's decodifications of style take off. No less, and certainly no more. The concept of homology permits the viewing of sub-cultural style as a 'structured', 'coherent' expressive formation; it also facilitates the pleasant fit between style and the more rigorous terrain of political economy.

But before I discuss the 'homologies' of the hippie sub-culture, the development of Centre readings of style in the post-war world of working-class youth reveals the convoluted route to the divorce of 'theory' and 'experience' and the often humourous extrapolations from the most tenuous of premise. And the readings of the skinhead sub-culture capture the subtleties of the sub-cultural theoretical enterprise in all its spectacular glory: theretically and at a more

humourous level, nowhere more than in the textual analysis of skinhead style does the divorce between the 'theory of youth' and the 'experience of youth' reach such grand oppositional extremes.

> Our basic thesis about the skinheads centres around the notion of community. We would argue that the skinhead style represents an attempt to re-create through the 'mob' the traditional working-class community, as a substitution for the real decline of the latter. The underlying social dynamic for the style, in this light, is the relative worsening of the situation of the working-class, through the second half of the sixties, and especially the more rapidly worsening situation of the lower working-class (and of the young within that). (4)

For Clarke, lumpen working-class youth, seen as the most fertile recruiting ground for the 'ideal' skinhead, was thus caught up in the declining fortunes of its parent culture. This, basically, was the common problem experience: the 'solution' was to take this section of youth away from the inaccessible world of the 'hip', predominantly middle-class sub-cultures already existing towards the end of the sixties, but also away from the existing cultural repertoires of its parent culture - there was no ready 'solution' available in that portion of the working-class whose defences had taken the severest battering from the ideologies of affluence and classlessness, yet which remained the most materially deprived.

The solution, then, was to recreate, albeit it 'magically' and symbolically, an idealised version of the now displaced sense of traditional community - a construction embracing the themes of 'Us and Them', aggression, territory and solidarity. Values conspicuously absent, and much missed by observing sociologists, in the parent culture. Hence the

'rough and ready' image of the skinheads; their 'hard' uniform of boots, braces and cropped hair, their less-than-eloquent vocabulary, drawing heavily on the masculinity and verbal aggression running through the oral traditions of the parent culture; their collective organisation into 'mobs', defending territorial boundaries and finding a natural habitat on the terraces of the local football ground where the rituals of resistance could be fought out in stylistic splendour.

And so, Clarke goes on:

> We may see these three interrelated elements of territoriality, collective solidarity and 'masculinity' as being the way in which the skinheads attempted to recreate the inherited imagery of the community in a period in which the experience of increasing oppression demanded forms of mutual organisation and defence. (5)

In this way the skinheads illustrate perfectly the reality of sub-culture: the continuity of stylistic content between parent culture and youth culture, accompanied, at a distinct historical moment, by a distinct discontinuity of form, use, and location.

The real 'meaning of skinhead', then, is not mindless violence, crude aggression, fascistic politics and blind ignorance, as even liberal sociologists were previously forced into concluding; instead it's a necessary structure of strategies and resistances formed to combat an oppressive class location.

And in a similar vein, the group-mindedness of the Teds must be seen as a reaction against the breakdown in the fifties of the traditional, extended-family network(6); the mods, the stylistic dandies of working-class youth sub-culture, were symbolically representing affluence itself through their

dependence on conspicuous consumption and the newly-available commodities of consumer capitalism.(7)

It is central to the sub-cultural theoretical promise that such cultural transformations carry a significance which propels them way above the terrain of pure and simple youthful fun and games. Whether my assertions that the process of cultural articulation is essentially unconscious and that the construction of the readings of stylistic symbols, through the notion of homology, is largely circular are correct or not, the 'meaning of skinhead' (or mod, ted, punk etc.) is a serious affair. The stylistic resignifications of the post-wat youth sub-cultures, nurtured in the climate of crisis and cultural breakdown, transform the meaning and practice of cultural resistance. Formed out of the collapse of old, crucially anachronistic strategies, the youth sub-cultures generate new techniques and postures of expressing the contradictions experienced in their class position. This is the politics of sub-culture.

But is such a politics of resistance oppositional, intervening in the battle of hegemony? Although the Centre would certainly like to see the wars of sub-cultural style as significant in a deeper, more politically profound context, the theory circles hesitantly and hedges ambiguously in its answers.

What worries the Centre's theorists, and prevents them from making positive and unqualified answers in the affirmative, is that although the sub-cultures are not themselves 'ideolog-

ical' or 'magical' (they are 'lived', concrete responses to equally concrete experiences drawn from the 'class problematic'), their offered 'solutions' are:

> There is no 'sub-cultural solution' to working-class youth unemployment, educational disadvantage, compulsory miseducation, dead-end jobs, the routinisation and specialisation of labour, low pay and the loss of skills. Sub-cultural strategies cannot match, meet or answer the structuring dimensions emerging in this period for the class as a whole. So, when the post-war sub-cultures address the problematics of their class experience, they often do so in ways which reproduce the gaps and discrepancies between real negotiations and symbolically displaced 'resolutions'. They 'solve', but in an imaginary way, problems which at the concrete material level remain unresolved. (8)

Our attention, therefore, is diverted away from the often naive, ideological content of the sub-cultures towards their <u>form</u>: their oppositional qualities reside in the acts of cultural construction of symbolic meanings, in the <u>practice</u> of style. It's the activity of stylisation itself - the ability, albeit founded upon incorrect perceptions of the 'concrete material level' of existence, to <u>transform</u> <u>and</u> <u>subvert</u> 'natural' cultural meanings - which expresses the political potential of sub-culture. But it is a power which remains only at the level of 'potential' because of the very success of the sub-cultural enterprise at the level of 'lived critique': despite the success at <u>cultural</u> subversion, the atheoretical, existential immediacy of the sub-cultural solution sets its wider political limits. Commenting on the sub-cultural solutions discovered in his own study, Paul Willis argues:

> Their responses contained no class analysis of fundamental causes and therefore no real chance of changing the world....Their oppositional and

> radical themes were worked out instead in immediate materials and along seems of meaning which did not challenge the basic structures and institutions of society. (9)

The solutions may be relatively efficient in their own terms (the expressive and the personal) - as Willis cites the hippies to be with their transformation of style into a full-blown lifestyle - but they nevertheless remain 'basically cultural sublimations of fundamental contradictions.'

But surely the hippie counter-culture must have possessed a power of political and cultural penetration beyond the level of the 'magical' and 'ideological' cultural critiques of the working-class youth sub-cultures: although similarly constructed at the intersection of parent culture and dominant culture, did it not aim its critique at the 'very apparatuses which manufacture "attachment" and internalise consent'? Interestingly, Resistance through Rituals, for its part, does not develop any thoroughgoing analysis of even the most commonsense understandings of counter-culture ideology: it remains content to offer a tirade of abuse against the most stereotyped of popular conceptions. Where the Centre's cultural theory appears to rescue the rationality of working-class sub-cultures from popular media mythology and slander, for their middle-class counterparts we learn only that they are 'anti-scientific in a mindless way'; that the seemingly innocuous slogan 'do your own thing' must be translated into 'nothing so much as a looney caricature of petit-bourgeois individualism of the most residual and traditional kind.'(10) But then, given the importance placed on the values of the parent culture in the

formation of youth sub-cultural styles perhaps we should not be too surprised at this mode of analysis.(11)

Of course, because of its peculiar situation in class and parent culture terms (running against the post-war tide of working-class styles and responses), the hippie, counter-culture style is articulating deeper, more profound levels of social contradiction than ever the skinheads or the mods attained, consciously or otherwise: the crucial difference between working-class sub-cultures and the middle-class counter-culture is at the level of the means of stylistic provocation and differences of strategic cultural access:

> ....because they inhabit a dominant culture (albeit in a negative way) they are strategically placed (in ways which working-class sub-cultures are not) to generalise an internal contradiction for the society as a whole. (12)

The counter-culture represents a crisis within the state itself and the style is a deeper expression of the contradictions of the capitalist economic and cultural system than those of its working-class counterparts, with their more specific, localised responses.

But, as we know by now, society cannot be 'imaginarily' redefined in the sub-cultural way from either strategic position, even when the agents of attempted reconstruction seem culturally well placed: again the hippie solution is only a cultural solution; a cultural response to real, social and economic, contradictions. The well-known hippie emphasis on the subjective and the personal could never realistically hope to transform the sub-culture's actual material location in aworld of cold and impersonal economic relationships.

Again this is a passive, negative sub-cultural scenario: all that can be positively said in favour of the middle-class youth counter-culture, effectively its only lasting degree of wider and deeper cultural penetration, is that it typifies exactly the idea that sub-cultures may occasionally prefigure and anticipate 'emergent social forms'. In Paul Willis' words the hippie counter-culture was 'profoundly premature'; as:

> .....post-revolutionary cultural responses to pre-revolutionary social, political and organisational problems. The working out of contradictions at a creative, cultural level played back a remarkable light on the larger contradictions of society, but could not resolve or work them through because they arose at a different and more basic plane. (13)

Although the rhetoric of failure is still evident, the profoundly creative homologies of the counter-culture's stylistic construction imparts a sense, a welcome quality of political pertinence.

Willis' argument restates the position adopted by Stuart Hall in 1969. In The Hippies: An America Moment, Hall locates the America hippie phenomenon in 1966/7 as the growth of a 'generational underground'; a force representing a radical attack on the values of Middle America and demystifying, in one glorious but short-lived moment, the ideologies of American cultural supremacy and sophistication. The hippies were the latest stage in a generational dialectic that signalled a sense of cultural disaffiliation and opposition; their direct antecedents were the Beats and the radical wing of student politics in the American universities in the early

sixties:

> .....it is the Beats who signalled the first breakaway movement in the long and unfinished trajectory of generational revolt in our period....the trajectory has moved through several phases: (a) There was the Beat Generation, primarily the poets, writers and shadow-artists who made up the loose Bohemian fraternity. (b) This was followed by successive waves of growing political radicalisation and militancy. (14)

Hall' basic point is that the hippie moment represented a temporary ascendance of the 'expressive' style of cultural strategy over the 'activist', more openly political style. It offered a momentary redefinition of the nature of the 'ceaseless dialectic' of the 'generational underground' where the personal and the subjective was emphasised over and above the political and the social. A valid critique of the supercillious and philistine lack of concern for the expressive, the artistic and the personal in much left theory and propaganda, they inject qualities into the political discourse significant over and above 'their capacity to survive intact as a separate formation'. The point is echoed by Willis in Profane Culture:

> The whole point about these cultures is that they show by example how larger solutions, political programmes and theoretical perspectives utterly fail to supply or even sense the importance of the cultural level, of transformation in detail, of change in routine and daily consciousness. (15)

One can only agree, just as the tone of Hall's location of the hippie moment within the post-Beat artistic milieu can be generally supported (however much the loss of history, the contrived inability to see style in anything other than an abstract sense, marking his later work may be regretted.)

But on a more critical note, there appears a mysterious absence in the Centre's general account of the hippie counter-culture. Where once the textual readers revelled in an ability to translate precisely the working-class cultural minutae of mod, ted, and skinhead styles, there is little more than silence. There is, it must be granted, the general dependence on the wonderfully circular theory of cultural homologies - inescapable when style is read as a closed cultural system - but there's certainly no attempt to present a convincing account of why attitudes of 'bourgeois individualism' become the dominant forms of counter-cultural ideological expression. Where's the concern with the deeper resonances of the ideology - the stress on the artistic, the mysticism, the very real attempt to redefine the politics of culture - which cannot be simplistically and patronisingly written-off as 'mindless'? And where's the customary translation of the sub-cultural visual style back to the cultural stockroom of the parent culture? These are serious absences, both in terms of the intentions of the Centre's project and in terms of a realistic, sociological unravelling of the complexities of the hippie counter-cultural style.

These omissions result in part from the Centre's confused development of the concept of culture itself: what has disappeared alongside the world of 'empirical youth' is the sociological idea of culture as a form of social practice. Culture effectively becomes ideology: Resistance through Rituals, amongst others, is a text not about youth but about the interplay of ideological formations around the post-war structural

core. Youth is not wanted - it confuses and contaminates the deeper, more serious theoretical issues. Hence its appearance rarely seems convincing; rarely seems to be anything other than an abstraction.

The other problem from which the Centre's confusions and omissions flow - one as yet untouched but which nevertheless underlies the whole Centre theoretical enterprise - concerns the eccentric use of class in the attempt to consolidate the field of youth culture in the mainstream of Marxist theories of history, ideology and culture. For what is apparent about the Centre's reduction of the problems and stylistic solutions of youth to problems of class is that this concept is only ever defined in relation to cultural institutions, never in terms of youth's relation to the organisation of production.

In part this theoretical trait arises from the Centre's under-the-surface flirtation with Althusserianism. Despite protestations to the opposite - that there is no straight 'supercession' from so-called 'culturalism' to the structuralist mode - Centre theory slips insidiously into the prose and concepts of Althusserian theory. What this means is that underlying class relations are posited but never revealed, 'read' but never seen, and have a dubious theoretical status but no existential one. It also means the abandonment of the terminology of empirical sociology, which includes more objective notions of youth and class, in favour of the theoreticism of the 'historical moment' and the 'structure in dominance'.

But the reduction of class to the cultural also arises from the direction taken in reading the sub-cultural text. As Graham Murdock and Robin McCron have stated:

> Sub-cultural studies start by taking distinctive sub-cultural styles and the groups who are involved in them, and then working backwards to uncover their class base. (16)

A point of criticism which should be taken, and which is reinforced by a pronouncement by Marx on the correct direction of the scientific enterprise:

> It is, in reality, much easier to discover by analysis the earthly core of the misty creations of religion, than, conversely, it is, to develop from the actual relations of life the corresponding celestialised forms of those relations. The latter method is the only materialistic, and therefore the only scientific one. (17)

In other words we must commence with the material, productive relations encircling youth's activities and within which youth is concretely located and only then can the decodification, the reading of the nuances and meanings of sub-cultural style be attempted: we should not read style and symbols back to reveal class and cultural determinations which are, anyway, dubious in their construction around institutions of leisure, the school and community. Again, the Centre has forgotten its prescription that culture arises, and challenges and threatens at the level of the clash between ideology and experience of the real world: sub-cultural theory is left, at best, with the considerable problem of what the nature of the 'youth experience' is. Youth is abstractly divorced from the young as a whole, as a process of change, and becomes, following the theory's American antecedents, confined

to 'deviants'. Sub-cultural theory fails to make sense of youth's activities, not only as a complex system of symbols but as actual activity: music, dancing, football and the rest may be the hooks the Centre latches onto in its readings of sub-cultural styles, but they are also activities, ways of passing time, enjoyed by the vast majority of people, both young and old, 'deviant' and 'normal'. What is involved in the reality of youth culture, what should be stressed but is passed over in the Centre's dependence on youth as the bearer through ideology of economic determinations, is the process of choice: the conscious and creative powers of cultural transformation and redefinition rather than the forced negativity of 'the sub-cultural solution'. This will be a prime concern in my later re-assessment of the 'hippie moment', the British counter-culture in the late 1960s. It is also a concern for Dick Hebdige in Sub-culture: The Meaning of Style.

Hebdige's reading of style is constructed upon foundations of a different theoretical composition to a tradition elaborated around Phil Cohen's conception of sub-culture, class and parent culture, and so confusingly informing Resistance through Rituals. In a series of shifts of emphasis we are led away from the terrain of problematical class relations as the focussing lens through which sub-cultural style must be read, into the equally opaque domain of race, immigration and West Indian culture:

> ...the history of post-war youth culture must be reinterpreted as a succession of differen-

> tial responses to the black immigrant presence in Britain from the 1950s onwards. Such a re-assessment demands a shift of emphasis away from the normal areas of interest - the school, police, media and parent culture (which have anyway been fairly exhaustively treated by other writers, see, e.g. Hall et al.1976) - to what I feel to be the largely neglected dimension of race and race relations. (18)

In a brave demonstration of autonomy from his Centre background, Hebdige appears inspired to redirect the sub-cultural discourse, to revise the cut-and-dried linkages of Resistance through Rituals.

But the shift is subtle; for Hebdige does not so much abandon 'parent culture' as systematically subvert its given meaning, taking its use out of its hitherto 'Marxist' setting. And to illustrate this substantial theoretical deviation, we can do no better than return to those magical rediscoverers of the importance to cultural politics of braces and the steel toe-cap, the late-sixties' skinheads. Hebdige comments:

> Here we find a dramatic demonstration of the thesis put forward in Resistance through Rituals that the 'sub-cultural response' represents a synthesis on the level of style of those 'forms of adaptation, negotiation and resistance elaborated by the parent culture' and others 'more immediate, conjunctoral, specific to youth and its situation and activities.' In the case of the skinheads, 'things' (dress and value system) taken from the located parent culture were not only transformed when placed within the context of a specific generational group: they were, in some cases, radically subverted. (19)

If the demonstration is 'dramatic', though, it is not quite the same. The 'magical' solution proposed by the skinheads - their reconstruction of an ideal-typical, tradition-based community - was not inspired, according to Hebdige, by the

history and conventions of their own white working-class parent culture at all: the model, the prime generative force in this instance of sub-cultural creation was West Indian culture, which by the late-sixties had made substantial and radical impact on the eroding urban working-class experience. The 'continuity with a broken past' was attempted through reference back not to the long history of white working-class community now physically and politically crumbling under the attacks of the affluent society, but to a section of 1960s British society whose direct attachment to indigenous values stretched back a bare twenty years. Moreover, the 'things' Resistance through Rituals informs us were radically subverted, were taken by the skinheads completely out of the context of working-class white use. Boots, braces, shirts, hair style may have been borrowed from images drawn from a romanticised past, but their distinctive, stylised use had its roots in imported black culture.

So for Hebdige, the formative conditions of youth's existence - their experiences 'immediate, conjunctoral, specific' - was an open and receptive exposure to the community's recently acquired black presence. If the school is important in sub-cultural stylistic formation (and the institutional settings and confrontations of youth are not ignored), it's because it provides an expansive avenue of access to a waiting black culture ripe for stylistic plundering.

So we can now see that the skinheads - and again the whole multifarious repertoire is subjected to a similar analysis - stylistically represent an ensemble of two cultures: they are 'composed on the cusp of two worlds,

embodying aesthetic themes common to both.' (20)

But why is black culture called upon to provide the foundations of the white sub-cultures strategies and patterns of resistance, to paper over the cracks in the imaginary relation between experience and ideology? Surely the experiences, the conditions of existence so crucial to sub-cultural generation, cannot be the same, in kind or degree, for both black and white youth?

The link is music: it's black music which attracts and forms the catalyst for the development of white youth sub-cultures. The logic of sub-cultural creation is the logic of the development of black music and white youth's varying attachment to its form and carried ideals. When, for example, the rock boom 'stabilised' in the mid-sixties with songs becoming 'romantic' and 'vapid', there followed a sub-cultural migration to the exotic and vibrant, but undeniably alien rhythyms of ska and soul. Hebdige captures this idea of the music/sub-culture dialectic succinctly:

> As the music and the various sub-cultures it supports or reproduces assume rigid and identifiable patterns, so new sub-cultures are created which demand or produce corresponding mutations in musical form. These mutations in turn occur at those moments when forms and themes imported from contemporary black music break up (or 'overdetermine') the existing musical structure and force its elements into new configurations. (21)

So when Hebdige addresses the basic question left distorted and essentially unresolved in Resistance through Rituals - i.e. why are post-war youth sub-cultural styles class styles - his answer is the confident 'they're not'. Youth sub-cultures

owe a far more substantial stylistic debt to the various influences of black culture and music than they do to the influence of their parent culture. For although Hebdige lays generous praise at the feet of Phil Cohen for his introduction of 'the raw material of history', and although he goes on to state that we must also

> explore the relationship between these spectacular sub-cultures and those other groups (parents, teachers, police, 'respectable' youth etc.) and cultures (adult working-class and middle-class culture) against which they are defined (22)

overall, he remains sceptical of significant sections of previous sub-cultural theory. If nothing else, it has placed too much stress on patterns of integration, and coherence at the expense of 'dissonance and discontinuity'; it makes no sense of the way:

> the sub-cultural form is made to crystallise, objectify and communicate group experience. We should be hard pressed to find in the punk sub-culture, for instance, any symbolic attempts to 'retrieve some of the socially cohesive elements destroyed in the parent culture'. (23)

There's no equivocation, however, over what sub-cultures 'do' once formed: we are plunged into the battlefied of the cultural sign, with the sub-cultural style standing as an intentional communication - 'It stands apart - a visible construction, a loaded choice. It directs attention to itself; it gives itself to be read.'(24) For Hebdige, the 'meaning of sub-culture', as with the meaning of culture in general, is always in dispute; charged and open to redefinition. And the area in which disputes and oppositions materialise, in which new

cultural definitions are offered and succeed or fail, is style.

By viewing culture in similar terms to Barthes, Hebdige concludes that the totality of everyday life is systematically overlaid with myth. And although the assemblage of cultural theorists into a nascent, revitalised 'Cultural Studies project' is always eclectic, the debts to the semiological tradition are apparent and acknowledged. And welcomed.(25) Barthes (before his unfortunate encounter with a far from mythical laundry van), with his descriptions and decodifications of the complex penetrations of myth into 'every possible level of social life', is to be praised for his transformation of the meaning of 'ideology' for cultural studies.

Hebdige's version of cultural and sub-cultural conflict, then, takes us far away from the rigours of mainstream British Marxist terminology and argument, and even away from the 'modernised' but often guarded theories of Centre orthodoxy:

> The struggle between different discourses, different definitions and meanings within ideology is therefore always, at the same time, a struggle within signification: a struggle for possession of the sign which extends to even the most mundane areas of everyday life. (26)

So style, created and read as a cultural sign, is not 'magical' in quite the same sense as in Resistance through Rituals. Hebdige is generally, and justifiably wary of a direct reading of the content of style as oppositional. And he derides those commentators on contemporary youth culture (Taylor and Wall being fair examples of this ilk) who contrive literal readings of style through reference back to concrete social

contexts: youth sub-cultural style is too opaque and its vocabulary too rhetorical, 'and rhetoric is not self-explanatory: it may say what it means but it does not necessarily "mean" what it "says".'

But more than this, the whole theoretical trajectory of cultural studies is carefully relocated on a new meta-terrain where a direct comparison with earlier sub-cultural theory becomes increasingly complex. The discourse is above the restrictions of viewing style wars as, in the way that sub-cultural theorist Mike Brake argues, at best 'dramaturgical forays on the main body of a culture.'

Hebdige certainly tackles the problem of class carried forward from other forms of sub-cultural theory, but is its replacement with Roland Barthes and Jean Genet allowing the author more than his fair share of theoretical and rhetorical licence? But then unlike orthodox Centre theory, Hebdige's concern is not the political economy of youth but the glorious struggle for the sign: no closet semiologist, he wears the badge, sells the paper and builds the party with pride.

But then it is at least arguable whether semiology, despite its many assumed 'Marxist' pretensions, is capable of 'explaining' youth. Certainly in Hebdige's existentialist euphoria 'empirical youth', along with class, disappears beneath a heady celebration of the moment of style. The problems of, and for sub-culture are revealed in this passage:

> Each sub-culture moves through a cycle of resistance and defusion and we have seen how this cycle is situated within the larger

> cultural and commercial matrices. Sub-cultural deviance is simultaneously rendered 'explicable' and meaningless in the classrooms, courts and media at the same time as the 'secret' objects of sub-cultural style are put on display in every high street record shop and chain-store boutique. Stripped of its unwholesome connotations, the style becomes fit for public consumption. (27)

Taking the problem of 'the larger cultural and commercial matrices' the flaws of Subculture: The Meaning of Style are revealed. The cultural matrix means, as we've seen, the dialectic between black and white youth played out through the fluid medium of music. But what is notable by its absence from Hebdige's account is the question that should logically run concomitant with his theory of sub-cultural stylistic creation: why are elements of black culture attractive to sections of British white working-class youth? Just why, in other words, is black music, dress and language so readily drawn into what is still, essentially, an antagonistic cultural 'way of life'? Hebdige states that black culture is seen as 'hip' or 'groovey', depending on the 'moment' of sub-culture in question, but he makes no attempt to explain why this is the case. A puzzling omission, and certainly one which is hard to explain: for by searching the institutions of film and media through which images of black culture have been disseminated would have allowed considerable further scope for the indulgence of the semiological imagination. But then he may have been forced to conclude that the dominant images of black culture have their roots in New York and Hollywood rather than Brixton and Bradford. And if Hebdige

had searched the style of the hippie sub-cultural 'moment' he would have seen the significance of the transatlantic media interplay in the construction of style, the processes by which, and from whom, the 'things' of style are appropriated. But then, of course, the force of his black music, white youth cultural dialectic would have been weakened.

What is missing from Hebdige's entertaining text, then, is the attempt to come to terms with the mechanisms of stylistic selection. But if in his pursuit of the true instant, the original moment of style Hebdige prefers to ignore the more general character of the media in this respect, he does not hesitate in his attack on the institutions of cultural exploitation he sees as undermining and corrupting the whole sub-cultural adventure and defusing the potentials of its 'revolt into style'. A diffusion of politics alongside the celebration of the commodity form.

> As the sub-culture begins to strike its own eminently marketable pose, as its vocabulary (both visual and verbal) becomes more and more familiar, so the referential context to which it can be most conveniently assigned is made increasingly apparent. Eventually, the mods, the punks, the glitter rockers can be incorporated, brought back into line, located on the preferred 'map of social reality'. (28)

Drawn to the youth sub-cultures presumably by their stylistic innovations and spectacle, the media representations, at first shocked and panic-stricken adopt a posture of moral outrage (punks as 'animals') which gradually gives way to the gently comforting (they're not so bad really; they even have mothers and adoring younger sisters). The point of

this process, Hebdige argues, is that the media is rendering the values and practices of sub-cultural style diffuse and politically defused by an incorporation into the everyday, prosaic discourse of mainstream culture. Punks may still be 'outsiders' but their secret codes are now easily read. Their cultural transformations and subversions of 'commonsense' become once more explainable by commonsense, 'rendered at once public property and profitable merchandise.'

So we can see two forces of incorporation running socially concurrent: the commercial, rendering the sub-cultural style 'fashionable'; and the ideological, making its once potent and subversive 'otherness' respectable and culturally and politically wholesome. The risk of sub-culture is always the risk of transformation into just another capitalist myth:

> by replacing a sub-culture engendered by history, a product of real historical contradictions, with a handful of brilliant non-conformists, satanic geniuses who, to use the words of Sir John Read, Chairman of E.M.I. 'become in the fullness of time, wholly acceptable and can contribute greatly to the development of modern music. (29)

Although I remain more than sceptical about the depicted nature of the 'real historical contradictions', the formation of the cultural dialectic used in Subculture: The Meaning of Style, I sympathise with his sentiments restricting the crude class-determinism used in such sub-cultural texts as Resistance through Rituals and with his intention to celebrate the Art of style. The reality of sub-culture is the elaborate historical romance, and Hebdige, the masterful and perceptive narrator of the tragedy, deplores the forces ranged against

the beauty of the creative act. The sub-cultural 'historical moment', in Resistance through Rituals claimed as the product of a specific conjuncture of material and ideological forces, becomes one of the individual's representation and expression of..... In the final analysis, for Hebdige, it doesn't really matter. As he says:

> style does have its moment, its brief outrageous spectacle, and in our study of style in sub-culture we should focus on that moment, on the fact of transformation rather than on the objects-in-themselves. (30)

'Youth' and 'class' may again have ceased to exist as processes and relationships of change, but then Hebdige is not celebrating youth, nor class but STYLE. Artistically thoughtful, consciously articulate, style becomes self-expression: an act of individual creative genius constructed within and aimed at repressive, antagonistic and philistine wider cultural milieu. Hence the obvious respect for Genet. This is the message of Subculture: The Meaning of Style beneath the uncertain and unconvincing references to Centre orthodoxy. The flaw in the message is readily acknowledged by Hebdige:

> The study of sub-cultural style which seemed at the outset to draw us back towards the real world, to reunite us with 'the people', ends by merely confirming the distance between the reader and the 'text', between everyday life and the 'mythologist' whom it surrounds, fascinates and finally excludes. (31)

My contention, founded perhaps on a different level of personal involvement with the sub-cultural cause and certainly on different theoretical inclinations towards style's involvement with history, is that this need not be the case.

Notes and References: Chapter Two

1. Clarke, Style, in Hall and Jefferson (eds), 1976, pp.177/8
2. ibid., p.177
3. ibid., p.179
4. Clarke, The Skinheads and the Magical Recovery of Community, in Hall and Jefferson (eds), 1976, p.99
5. ibid., p.102
6. See Jefferson, 1976
7. See Hebdige, 1976 and 1979
8. Clarke, Hall et.al., Subcultures, Cultures and Class, in Hall and Jefferson (eds), 1976, p.47
9. Willis, 1978, p.176
10. Clarke, Hall et al., op.cit., pp.66/7
11. See also Middleton and Muncie, 1981, p.84:

> Like all youth sub-cultures its focal concerns were coloured by its relation to its parent culture. Thus we should not be surprised to find such elements of bourgeois elitism as individualism, creativity and self-realisation, elevated within the counter-culture as revolutionary principles, or that its proponents should automatically presume they were acting in the interests of all youth.

12. Clarke, Hall et.al., op.cit., p.69
13. Willis, op.cit., p.177
14. Hall, The Hippies: an American Moment, in Nagel (ed), 1969 p19
15. Willis, op.cit., p.180
16. Murdock and McCron, Consciousness of Class and Consciousness of Generation, in Hall and Jefferson (eds) 1976, p.205
17. Marx, 1974, p.352
18. Hebdige, 1979, p.29
19. ibid., pp.56/7

20. ibid., p.57

21. ibid., p.69

22. ibid., p.73

23 ibid., p.79

24. ibid., p.101

25. see page 10:

> Barthes' application of a method rooted in linguistics to other systems of discourse outside language (fashion, film, food, etc.) opened up completely new possibilities for contemporary cultural studies. It was hoped that the invisible seam between language, experience and reality could be located and prised open through a semiotic analysis of this kind....

26. ibid., p.17

27. ibid., pp.129/130

28. ibid., p.94

29. ibid., p.99

30. ibid., p.130

31. ibid., p.140

CHAPTER THREE

The woodwork squeaks
And out come the freaks.
Was (Not Was).

Sub-cultural theory states that the rise of the spectacular post-war youth styles occurs at the intersection of the contradictory forces acting within the working-class, or less usually middle-class parent culture and within the more general setting of the post-war evolution of capitalist social relations. More specifically they occur, so the original argument goes, at the level of contradiction between 'experience' and 'ideology': youth, ever in a collective 'problem situation' because of the basic inadequacy of its changing relationships to economic forces and the dominant culture, finds the ideological 'solutions' available within the parent culture unacceptable and unrealisable. The essence of the sub-cultural act, then, is at the level of mediated response: youth is forced to create its own strategies, its own forms of resistance to the pressure of capitalist cultural hegemony. This is the transformative cultural practice of style.

But this response, the sub-cultural style of resistance, is necessarily flawed: ideological in its construction, it is only ever a 'magical' resolution of deeper, political and social problems. The style, in all cases, is 'basically cultural sublimations of fundamental contradictions'. And

it's this reasoning which sets the theoretical limits of sub-cultural opposition, which ropes off the boundaries of the wider cultural and political power of rituals of resistance. Youth sub-cultures are only oppositional in terms of their actual construction of style; they only challenge in as much as they, occasionally, pre-figure and anticipate future social relationships and styles of living.

The attractions of this style of analysis, the reasons why the Centre's sub-cultural theoretical paradigm grabbed the attention of cultural theorists and journalists searching for the rational and almost oppositional form of youth expression, are perhaps understandable. And certainly no subsequent excursion onto the youth cultural terrain has dared risk ignoring the seductive powers of the genre's dominant theory.

But the superficial grace of sub-cultural theory masks a coarse personality. Where the Centre appears to salvage the crucial elements of creativity and rational, conscious acting upon experience in the generation of style, it effectively offers a structured system in which little epistemological and ontological status is granted to either concept. Resistance through Rituals offers a version of youth cultural activity in which sub-sultures are born solely from the interplay of economic contradictions. The questions youth should be asking - about its material situation, about its relationship to the parent and dominant cultures, about ideology - are asked for it by the 'unconscious' system of economic relations. The only degree of cultural

creativity granted is at the level of the act, the 'moment' of stylisation. And in recounting the post-war chronology of stylising moments Centre theory loses its tenuous grip on both history and empirical reality in its attempts to provide a consistent class-based analysis. The youth sub-cultural project is a deadly serious affair from start to finish; far too serious to be left to the devices of youth itself.

The intervention of Dick Hebdige into the sub-cultural discourse was, in this light, urgent and crucial. His brief was to rescue the potentials of the moment of style from the crude and unsubstantiated class-reductionism of Centre orthodoxy; to put something approaching the sense of fun back into both 'creating sub-culture' and 'writing sub-culture'; to water-down the arid terrain of Hall, Clarke, Jefferson et al. and celebrate more openly, and often with more empirical credibility, the existential instant of style itself. For Hebdige, style is the act of individual creative genius; a mediated product of other styles, with seemingly few material roots or constraints. The tension in Hebdige, however, is found where his insistence on the powers and joys of relatively autonomous cultural creativity encounter his equivocal adherence to Resistance through Rituals' use of class and parent culture: the 'stylist's own voice', denied in the earlier text, is granted a rather ambiguous resonance in Subculture: The Meaning of Style.

The problem with Hebdige's eminently readable account is that he unfortunately misses the basic flaw in the Centre's

theoretical argument: the problem with the concept of class relations used in the parent text (and beyond that back to earlier forms of sub-cultural theory), is the purely abstract nature of its construction and its basis only in cultural, usually leisure institutions. A confusion (for a professed Marxist cultural sociology anyway) the deserved result of mismanaging the cultural dialectic: the result of commencing with the decodification of style and reading its meanings back to discover class relations instead of commencing with material class relations (and the level of contradiction between experience and ideology) and then unravelling the intricacies of cultural stylistic expression; the way culture (or sub-culture) makes sense of the 'problem situation' rather than the way the 'problem situation' unconsciously structures the cultural 'solution'.

Even within the confused adopted analytical mode, explaining the emergence of the hippie counter-culture appears to trouble Centre theory. The 'Left Puritanism' of Centre political ideology, which has difficulty locating the expressive form of working-class youth cultures on the real, serious map of British political history, shudders when it encounters the hippies' stress on powers of cultural creativity and individualism. Even in Willis' ostensibly sympathetic study, the hippies are at best dismissed, seen as something else readily consigned to the dustbin of history in the Centre's purging of unsavoury cultural elements. Where the Centre welcomes, in its idiosyncratic way, the extravagant world of the mods, teds and skinheads it remains deeply

suspicious of hippie motivations. For reasons that have never ceased to amaze me the Centre follows in a peculiar British Left tradition of deriding the serious cultural aesthetics and politics of the counter-culture while supporting and giving a sense of romantic cultural credibility to forms of youth activity that often never rise above the level of football hooliganism. The eclectic and fluid world of working-class youth culture is elevated to a position of historical significance denied an expressive form of cultural opposition which is truly 'engendered by history, a product of real historical contradictions.'

But beneath the Centre's unwillingness to understand the 'phenomenon of the counter-culture' is its theoretical inability to solve the hippie riddles; to read the 'homologies' in terms of, as Hebdige would say, 'the larger cultural and commercial matrices.' Despite the easy casting of elements of the hippie value system back to rather vague notions of 'bourgeois individualism', the application of the crucial Centre theme of parent culture clearly causes the otherwise confident textual readers headaches when faced with the visual innovations, ideological outrageousness, transatlantic influences and the mutated but certainly evident historical roots of the counter-culture. If the brevity and paucity of consideration accorded the counter-culture by the dominant cultural studies paradigm was not so disgraceful it would be laughable. The lengthy Profane Culture, while it occasionally offers pertinent insights into the hippie mentality, ignores what would have been the golden opportunity to elaborate

the intentions of the Centre cultural project: to show the real history of a style, the real and urgent choices made and questions asked when ideologies and experience confront each other in a tense situation. My own cultural studies project, more specific in aim than the grand designs of the Centre, will attempt to focus this problem precisely: to show how the late sixties' counter-culture stood in a direct historical line of cultural opposition centred around the problems, questions, and ideological tensions of artistic practice. The abstraction of 'parent culture' and the language of sub-cultural 'resistance', even, perhaps, the attempt to explain the hippies in terms of youth, will be discarded in favour of a more thorough analysis of, to use Centre terminology, 'those institutions which reproduce the dominant cultural-ideological relations'; to look, more precisely, at the educational and market relations of capitalist artistic practice which have focussed and formed alternatative cultural ways of seeing. With lasting gratitude, I can only thank the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies for so graphically revealing the pitfalls of the route. But first I need to assess some other attempts, representative of their genres, to explain the emergence of the counter-culture: many of which despite - or perhaps because of - the frailty of their sociological rhetoric get far closer to the reality of the hippie moment than the modernised, 'post-structuralist' Marxism of the Centre's accounts.

The first style of explanation is the 'worldview' model: generally American, and far removed from the Centre's veiled structuralism and suspect class determinism, worldview theorists prefer to explain the emergence of the sixties' alternative cultural style in terms of radical shifts in the 'spirit of the age'.(1) They stress, in other words, and take seriously, the realm of the ideological that Resistance through Rituals and its successors actively diminishes. And perhaps the most influential text within this style has been Theodore Roszak's The Making of a Counter Culture.

Roszak, if it needs emphasising, is describing the American counter-cultural phenomenon. But he makes a point strikingly similar in its overtones to what we've seen in Centre theory:

> ...by way of a dialectic Marx could never have imagined, technocratic America produces a potentially revolutionary element among its own youth. The bourgeoisie, instead of discovering the class enemy in its factories, finds it across the breakfast table in the person of its own pampered children. (2)

Hopefully, of course, even the Centre's Marxist-revisionism would not deviate to the extent of denying that the real 'class enemy' was still rooted in the factory gates; nor, as we've learned, would it describe the middle-class counter-culture as 'potentially revolutionary'. But if the political conclusions differ, the general language of the youth discourse, the tone of the essential class basis of the generational dialectic is preserved. The severing occurs with Roszak's emphatic insistence on the American technocratic mentality

as the pervasive spirit of the age and the prime catalyst for the provocation of the counter-cultural revolt.

Roszak argues the 1960s saw the consolidation of influence of the 'regime of experts' in American society: a state in which the activity of making cultural sense of the world had been formally transferred from 'non-technical man', the 'amateurish citizen', to the more sinister realm of a technocracy of specialists. This completed the process of historical construction of an ordered, rational world; one always and totally explainable in terms of the strict application of measured scientific criteria. It had become, in more European terms, the culmination of the ideals of the Enlightenment, covered with an ostensibly more human face and preferring to 'charm conformity from us by exploiting our deep-seated commitment to the scientific worldview and by manipulating the securities and creature comforts of the industrial affluence which science has given us.'(3)

The parallels between Roszak's obviously concerned analysis and Marcuse's earlier and more politically polemical One Dimensional Man are both significant and intentional. Roszak's analysis effectively commences with the proposition, subsequently running through the book, that science and technology are joined both empirically and conceptually to the process of capitalist modernisation, and that the resulting worldview has led to new, more subtle forms of social and cultural domination. Marcuse states:

> Technology as such cannot be isolated from the use to which it is put; the technological society is a system of domination which operates

> already in the concept and construction of techniques. (4)

The supremacy of technological modes of thought has rendered, in both the ideological and the material sense, older, more naked forms of coercion and repression obsolete. What came to characterise advanced western capitalist societies in the 1960s was a state of repressive desublimation: a condition in which cultural passivity and the control of dissent is assured and maintained by the apparent satisfaction of material and spiritual desires. He goes on:

> The distinguishing feature of advanced industrial society is its effective suffocation of those needs which demand liberation - liberation also from that which is tolerable and rewarding and comforting - while it sustains and absolves the destructive power and repressive function of the affluent society. (5)

For Marcuse, then, the consumerism of the affluent society has produced a truly false consciousness: a one dimensional attitude amongst the traditional agents of Marxist theories of social change, the working-class, predicated on the generation and satisfaction of false wants and desires.

The critique of technocracy element of Marcuse's damnation of one dimensional man is absorebed wholesale into Roszak's graphic description of the spirit of the technocratic age. So, moreover, is the philosopher's conclusion that the only realistic agents of social change now are the layers existing beneath and apart from this passive, conservative majority, 'the outcast and the outsiders, the exploited and the persecuted of other races and other colours,

the unemployed and the unemployable.'(6) And of course students. This heterogeneous layer is the only social sub-stratum able to deflect the advances of repressive desublimation and whose cultural strategies cannot themselves be easily deflected This assertion is central to what Roszak terms the Dialectics of Liberation. It is seen as being crucial to the formation of the anti-technocratic counter-culture.

Marcuse, together with such figures as C.Wright Mills, Norman Brown, Alan Watts and Timothy Leary, represents a major theoretical influence on the formation of counter-culture ideologies - there is a 'continuum of thought and experience among the young', particularly the rapidly expanding student body in the American universities, embracing and absorbing the new radical output. Although obviously different in their emphasis - across a spectrum encompassing drugs, Zen, sociology, as well as the potential of the outcast in the programme of rebellion - these writers are significant forces on youth's thinking in the 1960s because they all share an attack on what Roszak terms 'The Myth of Objective Consciousness'. So although Roszak's joint manifesto/explanation ultimately rejects Marcuse for going the way of all other Marxist flesh (toward, in other words, a final dependence on objective relations), the crucial element in his critique, shared with the others, is the belief in a more personal form of cultural politics offered to confront the impersonality and technocratic alienation of the modern age.

Inspired by such writers, this inclination underpinned

the counter-culture's apparently aimless subjectivity; a challenging of the 'prevailing reality principle' with a return to the visionary, the utopian and the chaotic:

> The artist who clings to his impossible vision at least preserves that much of heaven among us; the mad realist who turns from that vision for the sake of another 'practical' measure only takes us one step further into the hell of our alienation. (7)

For Roszak, the reality of the hippie counter-culture in the late 1960s was an awareness of the former, 'impossible' level of consciousness. It was an attempt to construct an alternative spirit of the age around an ideological barrier of mysticism, drugs, symbolism - a desire to escape - against the prevailing worldview of rationality. But the constructed solution is translated into something more potentially culturally formidable than mere ideological resistance to repressive technocracy: into a <u>lifestyle</u>.

> We grasp the underlying reality of the counter-cultural variety, then, if we see beat-hip bohemianism as an effort to work out the personality structure and total lifestyle that follow from New Left social criticism. At their best, these young bohemians are the would-be utopian pioneers of the world that lies beyond the intellectual rejection of the Great Society. (8)

The deeper implications of this rather complex extract from Roszak will be explored at a later stage. But for the moment it should be noted that Roszak has introduced elements into his analysis which are not fully developed. What is absorbed into the argument is an acknowledgement of the importance of the concepts 'artist' and 'bohemianism' to the emergence of the counter-culture, but they tend to be assimilated in a

way which subordinates their exact and more profound meaning to the more diffuse attempt to capture the spirit of a specific, fleeting historical moment.(9)

The problem is similarly expressed and exposed in the other 'counter-culture classic' from America - Charles A. Reich's The Greening of America. The flavour of this text, again as much confident manifesto as interpretation, is gained simply by reading the chapter headings: 'The Machine Begins to Self-Destruct'; 'Consciousness III: The New Generation'; 'Beyond Youth: Recovery of Self'; and 'Revolution by Cosncsiousness'. Reich's ambitious and desperately hopeful classification of the stages of evolution of American consciousness - from the early pioneering spirit of Consciousness I, through the mass-society alienation of Consciousness II, through to the rejection of technocratic rationality in Consciousness III and the counter-culture - is well known if quaintly archaic. But beyond its obvious dated and 'failed' feel, it shares the problems of Roszak's thesis. Both turn a spirited celebration of counter-cultural consciousness - seen most succinctly in Reich's typifications 'Whatever I am, I am' and 'I'm glad I'm me' - into a rather loose mode of analysis. The result in both cases is a style of contemporary journalism which, while always readable, skates lightly over substantial historical problems and which can afford, from time to time, to introduce new concepts without substantiation and with clear conscience. What is most glaringly absent is the location of this new 'idealism' in any serious historical context; an awareness that to

define the counter-culture at least partly in the terminology of art and bohemianism entails a certain responsibility of definition and critical action. What we get, in fact, is a rather vague notion of art as an 'idea'; something that captures and expresses the moment of consciousness rather than as a material form of cultural practice with real determinations in cultural history. Art, under the first view, is a system of ideas truly 'magical', appearing at given historical moments and with roots only in a detached and abstract 'spirit of the age'. Similarly, bohemianism is seen equally vaguely as 'something to do with art' - an expression in lifestyle of the state of existential angst which is the common, even universal condition of art and being an artist. What is missing is the institutional setting for the generation, dissemination and support of the alternative ideas of art. Art is held up as the paradigm of cultural freedom, as it is in Marcuse, and technocracy confronts the ideals of expressive liberation contained in the romanticism of art; but it confronts it shorn of the institutional and historical location of the two competing sets of ideas.

Worldview explanations of the counter-culture share at least one common assumption with Centre theory: that it is or was a youthful phenomenon; that it was a reaction, a response to certain commonly-experienced problems of age. Whatever cultural problems are experienced, youth experiences them at a deeper, more profound level. But other explanations

have taken the significance of age further, and offered, in the style of Mannheim, an analysis predicated more explicitly on the common bonds of generational consciousness. In lay terminology and the language of the popular media, the counter-culture (and other 'deviant' youth cultures) can be explained by recourse to the idea of the 'generation gap'.

This style of explanation is limited in its specific application to the counter-culture and requires little examination here, but D.Lawrence Weider and Don H.Zimmerman's Generational Experience and the Development of Freak Culture illustrates the possible problems when they state:

> It is thus notable that some members of one youthful age stratum in today's society resist cooperating with the existing social processes which allocate age-specific roles to persons of increasing chronological age. These youth call themselves 'freaks' and in our view they are the core of the counter-culture.....With respect to the problem of accounting for the development of a freak 'culture', Mannheim's analysis of the 'problem of generations' is especially useful. (10)

Mannheim's account, as developed by American structural functionalists like Eisenstadt and Coser, stresses that youth, as a biologically defined stratum, is in itself a period of tension and frustration: society needs to blend the young into the functional organisation of the system and youth either accepts or refuses. The problem for youth, and thus the take-off point for the study of youth culture, is one of differential generational expectations: age rather than class becomes the fundamental division in contemporary society, and the functional reconciliation of the 'generation

gap' replaces the strategies of class conflict.

The first problem with this approach, as Colin Campbell has argued (11), is that it tends to be circular: the existence of the 'generation gap' is demonstrated by the manifest existence of 'deviant' youth cultures in the post-war period. But a deeper problem, and one more apparent with the substitution of relations of age for class and social relations, is that we rarely know quite what the actual composition of the common generational consciousness is and what real problems it is addressing. As Simon Frith has argued:

> We can't understand youth in a class system without reference to that system, and we can only find out what all youth have in common... by reaching to a level of theoretical abstraction (the psycho-social needs of a group in transition) at which the material basis of youth culture vanishes from view. (12)

The problem with the counter-culture is that its class base, its forms of cultural affiliation, and its modes of cultural and political practice are often deceptive and ambiguous, defying a reading as just 'middle-class youth culture' as much as it defies a reduction to the 'generation gap'. And this leads to the last section of my review of explanations, critiques and apologies of the hippie counter-culture: those accounts that introduce in a more rigorous, sociological sense the cultural influence of a historical strand of bohemianism and artistic Romanticism at the head of which, somewhere, stand the hippies. From this point the focus of study transfers back to Britain and the British counter-culture.(13)

In Jock Young's The Drugtakers and Richard Mills' Young Outsiders, the historical references are usually tacit and undeveloped, buried beneath the rhetoric of their respective wider sociological concerns. In Frank Musgrove's Ecstasy and Holiness and Bernice Martin's enigmatic A Sociology of Contemporary Cultural Change, however, the problem of locating a recent style of cultural expression in a sometimes continuous, sometimes broken historical path of descent is approached more daringly.

Young's book makes, by now, fairly familiar comments about the role of drugs in the hippie counter-culture, and invokes the language of a nascent sub-cultural theory in describing the symbolic fit between a drug's specific sub-cultural use and the sub-cultural ideology and store of meanings.(14) But Young also offers a scheme of opposing social values similar in implication if not construction to the argument of Matza and Sykes I mentioned in chapter one. Where the American model argued that deviant or delinquent values may be open expressions of more general, but largely sublimated states of behaviour and thought, Young states, concentrating on differential attitudes to work, that the opposition is between formal and subterranean structures of meaning. Where the formal, dominant value system claims deferred gratification, future planning, conformity, routine, instrumentality and the virtues of work, subterranean values counter with short-term hedonism, spontaneity, 'ego-expressivity', excitement, doing something for the sheer hell of

it, and a general disdain for work:

> All members of society hold these subterranean values; certain groups, however, accentuate these values and disdain the workaday norms of formal society. (15)

The active subterranean refuses a conception of leisure linked restrictively to work, as 'an area where just rewards for conscientious labour are enacted', and steps into a committed celebration of the arena of play. And in youth sub-cultural terms, Young develops three distinct patterns of adherence to the contrasting value systems. Firstly, 'conformist youth culture' comprises the vast majority of forms of youth cultural expression and appears to construct its leisure activities - courtship, popular music, entertainment - along the acceptable lines of the formal pattern. 'Delinquent youth culture', on the other hand, is largely a product of 'lower-class culture', the most recognisable domain of subterranean values. The stress is on 'kicks', instant hedonism and excitement; the world of the ted, mod and skinhead. But the third category, 'bohemian youth culture', is of an altogether different order. Being generally from a middle-class background the bohemian is not subject to an endemic, <u>forced</u> cultural stress on the subterranean; the bohemian resorts to leisure, but

> his dissociation is a matter of choice rather than a realistic bowing to the inevitable. Moreover, his disdain for society is of an articulate and ideological nature. He evolves social theories which uphold subterranean values as authentic guides to action, and which attempt to solve the problem of the domination of the ethos of productivity. (16)

For Young, then, the hippie counter-culture is an instance of this latter category, an expression of bohemian attitudes to work and leisure in its Dionysian emphasis on spontaneity, hedonism and creativity. It opposes the formal world of work by openly and articulately celebrating society's subterranean values - leisure not work is the arena in which man's true social identity can and must be realised.

This is the reality of the hippie drug sub-culture. Illicit psychotropic drugs are used because only they can reinforce the sense of shared identity and facilitate the higher, transcendental levels of the subterranean worldview. LSD is preferable to alcohol, for instance, because it takes the user more positively away from the world of formal 'workaday reality'; the solutions appear more severe because the 'problem is experienced as more severe'. In this way drugs become the focus for the hippie sub-culture; the trigger for releasing a deeper commitment to the subterranean, and a deeper, more permanent distancing from the mundane, everyday world of formal work and leisure. In Young's words:

> ....more profoundly, the use of LSD to produce hallucinogenic experiences acts as a catalyst to the bohemian exploration of identity and subterranean values. New aesthetic perspectives are developed (consider the emergence of psychedelic-influenced art and music) and transcendental experiences lead to an interest in Eastern mysticism. (17)

Richard Mills, from more socio-psychological premises, comes to similar conclusions - that hippie culture is fundamentally bohemian in character, and that bohemianism itself represents

a questioning and ultimately rejection of formal patterns of work and leisure. Historically, bohemianism has reacted against a society increasingly complex in its organisation and increasingly antagonistic towards basic human traits of creativity and autonomy in its organisation of work. Mills states:

> The conclusion of the bohemian tradition is, then, that it is only by moving outside the routines and specialisation of the world of work that the individual may preserve his natural inner 'self' and bring it to full fruition. (18)

It's this sense of 'movement' which locates the hippies and demarcates their responses from conventional society. Non-bohemians, those who accept the dominant definitions of work and leisure, actively if unconsciously connive, the hippies believed, in their own state of repressed conventionality. Through a willing suspension of disbelief, the prosaic world of work is embraced as 'natural' and the 'inner conflicting feelings, wishes and impulses', the qualities celebrated by the hippies as demonstrative of the enlightened 'self', are actively suppressed. For conventional society, and for conventional youth culture, the formal reigns over the subterranean.

To become a hippie, then, requires a positive act of will; a conscious moment of dissociation in which 'visions' and 'dreams' spark a process of the total transformation of personal and social definitions. Drugs and music become the centres of the ritual, the 'sacrements of renewal', and

the sources of group identity, and the equation of work and leisure, the definition of 'free' time, focusses the revised everyday reality of the constructed bohemian solution.

Frank Musgrove, concerned more specifically with the idea of counter-culture rather than the hippies, again states the centrality of the redefinition of work to the construction of an alternative sub-culture:

> The counter-culture rejects work but is devoted to service. Thus redefined, work becomes leisure and the whole of life. (19)

This, for Musgrove, is the reality of the progression of counter-culture ideology in 1973: a progression from a more or less complete abstinence from work in all its forms to a more active and complex sense of redefinition. Labour based on an awareness of use value does not have to conflict with the continued stress on powers of creativity and autonomy; work based solely on the formal demands of 'exchange relationships' necessarily does. But if the equally essential quality of 'fun' is to retained in the revised version of counter-cultural ideology, what is to be the model for the new, more active definition? Musgrove answers this by making more explicit Mills' links between the hippie counter-culture and the bohemian tradition: the model for creative labour is Art, and the model of Art is Romanticism. In Art, the story goes, work <u>is</u> leisure: an ideology which permits both the activity of autonomous and creative productive labour coupled with a mode of realising and fulfillinf personal visions, dreams and the expression of inner states of consciousness

and aspiration. The ideological style of the counter-culture draws consciously on the tradition of Romanticism: a style reaching back far beyond the immediate antecedents of the Beat Generation:

> Nineteenth-century Romanticism was strikingly like the contemporary counter-culture in its explicit attack on technology, work, pollution, boundaries, authorities, rationality and the family. It had the same interest in altered states of mind, in drugs, in sensuousness and sensuality. (20)

Even the later splits in the character of the counter-culture - between the more orthodox politicised rejection of power structures and social organisation and the retreatist rejection of the totality of the boundaries of modern life - have strong precedents in the divisions with nineteenth-century Romanticism between Godwin and Shelly and Southey and Ruskin.

Despite its promising advances, one of the problems with Ecstasy and Holiness is that it leaves some questions confused and others unanswered. Fine Art students score highest on the author's sampled 'scale of counter-cultural attitudes', but the comparisons and largely metaphorical historical references with earlier forms of Romantic ideology resort to the safe ground of literature and politics. Art is the chosen mode of labour of the more contemporary counter-culture (witness the resurgence in handicrafts, the reliance on graphics etc.), and it reconciles the rejection of formal work discipline with the pressing need to survive in the material sense (what mysticism, the unconscious, and the expression of inner feelings alone rarely ensures): but the

cultural dialectic between Art and society, between styles of art, and between the stylised historical solutions of Romanticism and the hippie counter-culture remains largely undeveloped in the argument. The example of the Hornsey sit-in in 1968 (a crucial date in the counter-culture's British chronology, and largely, as we'll see, a product of disenchanted Fine Art students) is included only to illustrate the thesis that central to the concerns of the counter-culture was the active redefinition of work norms. The specificity of artistic practice as a focus for the generation of counter-cultural definitions is not refined - the counter-culture has something to do with Romanticism and Romanticism, as a solution to certain cultural problems, has something to do with Art.

Enter Bernice Martin, stating not only that an understanding of Romanticism is crucial to the explanation of the counter-culture but also:

> I see the process of cultural change in the post-war decades as a continued working out of the principles of Romanticism which had rooted themselves in North American and Western European culture at the outset of the modern age. (21)

Bernice Martin plunges headlong into waters where Musgrove, and few other declared sociologists would fear to tread. And this is perhaps both the strength and weakness of her frustratingly absorbing attempt to provide 'a sociology of contemporary cultural change': the strength is that she offers the most lucid analysis to date of the influence of Romantic themes, motifs and debates on the construction of the

counter-culture; the weakness is that some of her extrapolations from the above premise are at least doubtful when applied to other cultural and political phenomena.(22)

But the strength of the book is that it develops the conceptual linking of Art, Romanticism, bohemianism and the changing definitions of the counter-culture to a greater degree of sophistication than any text so far encountered. The style of the sixties' counter-cultural underground is not the product of abstract dislocations in the middle-class parent culture, nor does it arrive magically as a pure function of age or the spontaneous existential angst of man versus technology. Instead, the underground plundered Art's store of meanings and images and, more significantly, constructed 'solutions' around bohemianism. The 'problem situations' of the counter-culture were the problems of Art:

> The avant-garde arts were the Pandora's box out of which came all the motifs and techniques of anti-structure which the counter-culture, the political Underground, the student revolutionaries and the expressive bohemians employed in their concerted attack upon the landmarks of the culture of boundary and control. (23)

Familar boundaries attacked were those of work and leisure. But the underground bohemians of the sixties also conducted a crusade, along the lines of previous Romantic campaigns, against distinctions between the public and the private, between 'art and ordinary life', between the artist and the work of art and the artist and the viewer.

Although superficially similar to other statements about the nature of the counter-culture, the advantage of Martin's

approach is that she locates the continuities within what appears to be a deeper understanding of the history of Romantic ideologies of art. She recognises Romanticism as an attempt to rationalise real problems of artistic practice occurring from the end of the eighteenth century. She argues correctly that, from time to time up to the present day, the class location of artists has been marginal. She gives sound reasons for the elitism of avant-garde movements, and describes well if over-dramatically the extension and influence of the sixties' counter-cultural avant-garde into wider cultural spheres of consciousness and practice; the ways in which examples of Romanticism's continuing 'anti-structure' emphasis have become assimilated to the core of cultural sensibilities.

Martin notes the three example of avant-garde artistic movements that appeared 'particularly attractive models of extreme anti-structure for the sixties generation to rework':

> The first was Dada, leading on to Surrealism... The second influential model in literature was provided by James Joyce's radical personalisation of language...The third, rather later model, itself much influenced by Dada, was the American Beat Generation of the thirties and forties. (24)

Despite the problem of dating here (25), the tone of the descent can be accepted: the counter-cultural argument of the sixties was a re-expression of Romanticism, a revamped pastiche of earlier counter-cultural artistic styles. The problem with her analysis, the faults in her own reconstruction of this pastiche, will be discussed shortly. But first one

further brief word of praise: Martin's book is valuable for its conceptual distinction between the tangible terrain of the counter-cultural underground and the more diffuse world of hippie youth culture.

But the manner in which she achieves this split is worrying. As we've seen, the underground stands in the line of Roamntic dissociation and cultural criticism through artistic ideas and artistic practice. But when we come to the component elements of the underground - the 'hippies, yippies, freaks, and members of the late 1960s drug scene - we are inexplicably thrown back, following on from a discussion of the contribution of Dick Hebdige's readings of working-class youth style, into the language of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies. From an analysis otherwise commendably centred on the essential class marginality of forms of significant cultural practice, we are taken back to the straightforward, simplistic and abstract linking of sub-cultural form to parent culture. So the way the middle-class mode of individualism is translated into a counter-cultural form is accounted for thus:

> Given the humanistic ethos of the professional middle classes from which they were disproportionately drawn, this was not a sharp conversion but more a mild mutation of the parental value system. The youthful version of middle-class individualism simply devotes itself to the achievement of new levels of consciousness rather than to material success. (26)

Suddenly the cultural dialectic can be seen as 'simply' a reflection of the youthful dislocation of parent culture norms.

The counter-culture is again reduced to a collection of deviant middle-class kids.

This is unfortunate if symptomatic of other inadequacies in a thesis which, in many ways, heads towards a valuable demystification of the counter-culture.(27) The reason for the confusion resides, I think, in a misreading of the development and thus the continuing cultural significance of Romanticism: and this in a sense is what binds her text to those of Young, Mills and Musgrove. Although correctly locating the counter-culture in the historical trajectory of Romanticism and bohemianism, the nature of these forces cultural opposition as an ideologically defined practice of art is lost beneath the weight of the purely ideological and the idealist. The material basis of artistic production vanishes in the same way that the material basis of youth culture slides away from sub-cultural theory and theories of generational consciusness and 'spirit of the age'. What is lacking is an attempt to define both the historical forms of Romanticism and the sixties counter-culture institutionally; an attempt to make the real links between oppositional, alternative cultural styles and the material practice of art both more explicit and more sociological.

Where conceptions of bohemianism and Romanticism surface in the above texts they have yet to be rescued from popular imagery of the artistic life and, perhaps more significantly, from the abstract world of the art historians. We are left with a sense of worldview idealism which, just as Roszak

unproblematically links the philosophy of Marcuse to the construction of the hippie style, makes facile connections between complex sets of historical ideas and material and institutional settings. As Bob Wistrich pondered in IT (no. 45, 1968), What is One-Dimensional Thought, and Who's Marcuse?:

> Herber Marcuse has been hailed as the prophet of the student revolution. Well, the bourgeoisie and its journalist lackeys had to pin it on someone - so why not an old man of seventy, author of several philosophical investigations into Hegel, Marx and Freud - something of an anomaly don't you agree?

The problem of the misconception of the nature of Romantic artistic practice, and therefore the flaw in the whole theoretical enterprise, is illustrated by Martin's statement that in the sixties 'expressive possibility came to be erroneously equated with youth'.(28) The error of this remark is that expressive possibility and expressive potential had been equated with youth for a long time. Not youth defined as simple generationally-distinct groups, but youth standing, in artistic terms, on the front line of where the oppositional, counter-cultural stresses of Romantic ideology have confronted the realities of the institutional organisation of art under a capitalist system of productive and exchange relations. Such an emphasis goes some way to a more realistic explanation of why sections of artistic 'youth' have often been the most vocal and most forceful in the denunciation of culture and society: taking the Romantic stress on creativity and autonomy at its face value and claiming it as an artistic birthright, they have always

been confronted by sets of external demands and internal conventions - definitions of Art, work and leisure, often politics - fundamentally antagonistic to that inheritance. Commencing with a general discussion of Marxist theories of artistic practice and the relation of art (and the artist) to society and culture, this is the 'theoretical overview' informing my own explanation of hippie style.

Centre theory contains no real idea of where the style of ideological opposition comes from. Worldview theory, in its various stages of sophistication, correctly sees the significance of Romanticism and earlier bohemian solution, but ultimately fails because of the weakness of its definition of artistic practice. Art is reduced to a level of abstraction in which its institutional framework - the structures which have carried Romantic ideologies of Art and culture, and which have exposed successive generations of practitioners to conflicting demands of 'ideology' and 'reality' - disappears.

Notes and References: Chapter Three.

1. Further examples of this approach must be plucked from the rarefied air of American sociology; perhaps most notably recently the work of Peter L.Berger, in particular The Homeless Mind, Berger, Berger and Kellner, 1974.

2. Roszak, 1969, p.34

3. ibid. p.9

4. Marcuse, 1968, p.14

5. ibid. p.20

6. ibid. p200

7. Roszak, op.cit., p.101

8. Roszak, op.cit,, p.66

9. As an example of this critique, see Birnbaum, 1971:

> Roszak manifests a rather general awareness of the origins of his critique of the 'objective consciousness' - but he tends to extract precedents from spiritual history without considering the problem of alternation in the modes of experience as a problem with serious implications for his own position. p.18

10. Weider and Zimmerman, 1974

11. Campbell, 1980

12. Frith, 1978, p.26

13. For example of similar arguments applied to the United States, see Bennett M.Berger, 1967, and Hunt, 1970. Similar criticisms apply.

14. See for exaple:

> ...one must explain such behaviour in terms of the particular sub-cultures to which each of these groups belong. The meaning of drugtaking has to be sought in the context of the group's values and world view.
> Young, 1971, p.124

This is familar....except that where Willis speaks of 'homologies', Young uses the fashionable language of a few years earlier and speaks of the 'ongoing dialectic'.

15. ibid. p.126

16. ibid. p.147

17. ibid. p.163

18. Mills, 1973, p.11

19. Musgrove, 1974, p.174

20. ibid. p.64

21. Martin, 1981, p.1

22. See for example the following statements:

> Dadaesque nonsense and surrealist, anarchic juxtaposition had become the staple fare of advertising and of family comedy by the late 1970s. ibid. p94
>
> ...the only directly political movements which had learned from the Underground recipes for millennial warfare were the Irish sectarians on both side of the Ulster conflict. ibid. p134

And again where she states that black, women's and gay lib. movements have since used the same 'Dadaesque ploys' the Underground pioneered.

23. ibid. p.79

24. ibid. p.98

25. Although coined by Kerouac in 1948, the terms 'Beat Generation' did not enter popular speech until John Holmes' article in The New York Times, Nov.1952. See Rigney and Smith, 1961, p25

26. Martin, op.cit., p.147

27. See, where talking of significance of Pop Art, she states: it 'offers us the whole anti-structure package: the breaking of taboos. Martin, op.cit. p.112

The sense in which this is true is extremely limited. Also:

again on Warhol, 'He links the political Underground, the arts and the mass media.' p.112

Quite how Warhol is translated into the political Underground is thankfully not explained.

28. Martin, op.cit., p.151

PART TWO

Although many meanings cluster round the word masterpiece, it is above all the work of an artist of genius who has been absorbed by the spirit of the time in a way that has made his individual experiences universal.

Kenneth Clark, What is a Masterpiece?

Of course, there is art. A bomb in the National Gallery would make some noise. But it would not be serious enough. Art has never been their fetish. It's like breaking a few back windows in a man's house; whereas, if you want to make him really sit, you must try at least to raise the roof. There would be some screaming of course, but from whom? Artists - art critics and such like - people of no account. Nobody minds what they say.

Vladimir to Verloc, Joseph Conrad, The Secret Agent.

CHAPTER FOUR

> It is not until the romantic movement that the idea prevails regarding the 'young' as the natural representatives of progress, and not until the victory of romanticism over classicism that any mention is made of the fundamental injustice in the older generation's attitude to youth.....When Gautier stresses the pure formalism and play character of art, when he desires to free it from all ideas and all ideals, his supreme wish is to emancipate it from the dominion of the bourgeois order of life.
>
> Arnold Hauser, The Social History of Art, vol.3

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The problems of historically tracing the development of an ideology with a view to asserting its continuing cultural significance are compounded when obstinate irregularity rather than cohesion appears to mark its progress. Bohemiamism, as we shall see, has always been an amorphous 'movement', embodying a wide variety of artistic motivations and directions; a swirl of often opposing ideologies within, perhaps, a wider ideological framework. Bohemianism, as we've seen so far and as its popular connotations would suggest, has always been 'something to do with art', and it certainly cannot be disentangled from the complex processes of art and artistic practice.

But bohemianism is a 'deeper' ideology than the popular conception of the wandering gypsy, the itinerant vagabond artist suggests. Its analysis raises problems and questions about the production, sale and consumption of the work of art; about the institutions, both formal and informal, state and rigidly commercial, that encourage, support and promote

artistic production. In its few obvious unifying traits, it suggests that the bohemian artist, whether writer or painter, is always against bourgeois aesthetic taste, but not always against the more general features of bourgeois society; it always in some sense suggests the questioning of the accepted canons of 'academic art', even though its paid-up followers have not always sprung from the burgeoning ranks of the art academies; it always questions, to borrow John Berger's term, the dominant culture's 'ways of seeing' and rejects the offered 'purpose' of art and the ascribed, legitimate methods of artistic creation.

But there can be no simple summary of bohemianism beyond such initial statements: its movements are too fluid, its internal contradictions and oppositions too complex, its debates often too obscure. Bohemianism confidently exhibits its 'progressive' and 'reactionary' sides, if not always simultaneously then at least in rapid succession; it has embraced socialism and passive, other-worldly spiritualism; it can look forward and welcome cultural modernity or back to the past and celebrate the myths and ideals of a romantic Middle Ages; it can be bourgeois or radically anti-bourgeois. It includes both elements of Yeats' famous verse: those who 'lack all conviction' for matters non-aesthetic and those possessed by a 'passionate intensity'.

Attempts to expand and deepen the history of bohemianism have been pursued either within the confines of artistic practice itself, linking its expression to largely stylistic

innovations and refinements, or by attempts to locate its development and significance within a social and cultural context. The former, largely the domain of the art historians, although generally descriptive if left unmodified, will add the meat to the theoretical bones of my analysis. But the 'theory' - the satisfactory historical and recent location of bohemianism within this wider social and cultural context - is a not unproblematical exercise. As we've seen, attempts to incorporate the concept into analyses of recent cultural phenomena have often taken on a metaphysical, almost mystical quality, where the material and institutional settings of the ideology's cultural penetration, as well as much of the history, disappears. I would argue, as indeed the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies tried to argue, that the sociology of culture and cultural change demands some form of class, institutional analysis. But if this inclination in turn demands at least the recognition of the sphere of Marxist theories of culture, the path to enlightenment, as the Centre found to its cost, is neither clearly marked nor often rapid. The Centre's adoption of this mode relies on a form of simple class-reductionism: something as seemingly vague, as wishy-washy as bohemianism, which neither fits into the notion of parent culture nor can be given any general theoretical credibility, is ignored in the reflections on the hippie counter-culture. But, from my own point of view, attempting to situate the power of the bohemian critique within the parameters of a Marxist mode of analysis of culture and art

raises problems which, although not defeating the object of the enterprise, certainly require careful negotiation. Reconciling the premise that the hippie counter-culture cannot be understood without an understanding of bohemian ideologies of artistic practice with a Marxist theory of culture is not impossible: it's just that Marx, as if anticipating the confusions of Centre theory, often makes the marriage a difficult one.

The initial strength of a Marxist analysis of art and artistic production is its dogged realism: its refusal to be blinded by self-constructed and imposed versions of what the nature of that production under capitalism is. Artists, men of letters, and the new professionals of the nineteenth century were, for Marx, as inalienably a part of the substance of capitalism's proletarian base as the most prosaic wage-labourer; the means of production of culture and art as much a part of the structure of capitalism as industrial production. All such relations, whether recognised or not, are governed by the same rules, and tie the worker, irrespective of superficial differences, to capitalism's system of production without exception or favour. Marx comments thus:

> A writer is a productive labourer not in so far as he produces ideas, but in so far as he enriches the publisher who produces his works, or if he is a wage-labourer for a capitalist. (1)

Yet the artist's links with the mechanisms of the market are more deceptive, and potentially more self-deceiving than in

the case of his directly-waged, factory-based counterpart. Part of the problematical complexity of this relationship lies, as we shall see, in the artist's perception of this production of 'ideas'. But it also resides in the more overtly contractual, less directly patronised nature of the artist's position: they, like all capitalism's labourers, 'live only so long as they find work, and....find work only so long as their labour increases capital.' A position expressed by Ernst Fischer in The Necessity of Art as:

> Previously the artisan had worked to order for a particular client. The commodity producer in the capitalist world now worked for an unknown buyer. His products were swallowed up in the competitive flood and carried away into uncertainty. (2)

If this rather dramatic phrasing is a familiar restatement of the worker's situation under capitalism, revealing part of the uncompromising ties to the deeper structure of social relations formed by the commodity nexus, his continuation of the statement on the artistic position contains an insight into the paradoxical and ambiguous nature of this link as it affects the artist in particular:

> For the first time in the history of mankind the artist became a 'free' artist, a 'free' personality, free to the point of absurdity, of icy loneliness. Art became an occupation that was half-romance, half-commercial. (3)

Again Fischer's comments are not exceptional, either in their formulation or in their applicability, to a greater or lesser extent, across the board of capitalist social relations. In the sense used by Fischer, all workers became 'free', in

that their relationship to the means of production and thus to subsistence became contractual rather than traditionally tied.

But its rhetoric does say something of the general cultural shifts, the radical changes in the cultural experience that occurred with the ushering-in of industrial capitalism. 'All that is holy is profaned', Marx stated, and he meant the tearing apart of the traditional, once sanctified 'natural' ways of seeing and explaining the world. The 'holy' meanings of pre-industrialism are replaced by the modernised, 'profane' meanings of the new age.

No individual or class could escape the breakdown of the old forms of integration and mystification, but the artist and the vaguely described 'man of letters' occupies a more curious and contradictory position than most. His gifts, his contribution to the economic and cultural vitality of the new age, relied less on the possession of physical strength and manual skills as on the more intangible qualities of intellect, imagination, vision and, increasingly, creativity. The strength of the Marxist approach has been its claim to explain such 'gifts' socially rather than mystically: to locate their emergence - and their usage, particularly in terms of forms of artistic production, is a function of the rise of the capitalist mode of production - in the material changes of social production.

And to a large extent this claim to concrete realism is justified, despite the slightly mystical tinge of many of

Marx's own pronouncements:

> The same kind of labour may be productive or unproductive. For example Milton, who wrote Paradise Lost for five pounds, was an unproductive labourer. On the other hand, the writer who turns out stuff for his publisher in factory style, is a productive labourer. Milton produced Paradise Lost for the same reason that a silk worm produces silk. It was an activity of his nature. (4)

More generally Marxism guides us into the following areas for the foundations of an analysis of art.

The first serious crisis within art, the first battle for its soul, occurs in the eighteenth century. The 'holiness' and certainty of purpose crumbles to reveal, in the artistic personality, a creature racked by self-doubt and rising uncertainty. In no previous historical period had the artist been both publicly reviled and romanticised; as being seen to represent a courageous, isolated struggle against external and essentially repressive forces, and as posing a veiled, intagible, but always real threat to the existing cultural order. Although most certainly in some ways a part of the fabric of myth that surrounds art, what is now seen as 'great art' emerging from this period and beyond has been elaborated around the ideology of the struggling visionary, the lone innovator at odds with himself, the official institutions of art, and the rest of society. In this vein John Berger comments:

> Each time a painter realised that he was dissatisfied with the limited role of painting as a celebration of material property and the status that accompanied it, he inevitably found himself

> struggling with the very language of his own art as understood by the tradition of his calling...To be an exception a painter whose vision had been formed by the tradition, and who had probably studied as an apprentice or student from the age of sixteen, needed to recognise his vision for what it was, and then separate it from the usage for which it had been developed. Single-handed he had to contest the norms of the art that had formed him. He had to see himself as a painter in a way that denied the seeing of a painter. (5)

Berger's account of the 'loneliness' and innovation of art pre-dates the eighteenth century, which is correct in the 'exceptional' terms that he recognises - going back, as he says, to Michelangelo. But within the wider frame of reference - the crisis within art as a whole - we are drawn again towards the eighteenth century and how the need and power to be an 'exception' tied-in with the structural changes seen so far.

Prior to this period the artist's relationship with the wider society was unambiguous. Art was rigidly subordinate to the imposition of 'higher' values: generally religious but also celebratory of the acquisition and possession of property. It was a repository of values, even 'truth' - but values and truths always external to the artistic process itself. The artist, or more accurately the artisan remained essentially a menial under the system of patronage: a skilled craftsman, admittedly, but one guided by the demands of an external social reality.

The specific implications of the demise of the patronage system will be developed when I discuss the covering philosophical, artistic and cultural ideology of Romanticism which gripped the 'loose' artistic imagination during a period of

intense and general social and cultural conflict. At this stage it is sufficient to note that the 'artistic imagination' had indeed arrived: there was a widely felt idea among artists that their practice was the exercising of an autonomous quality of genius; the term 'artist' itself came increasingly to connote the possession of a skill directly allied to and dependent on creativity and imagination; art, in the minds of both artist and bourgeoisie, came to be seen as an independent repository of truths more profound and 'truer' than social values; and lastly the production of art was perceived as just one of a number of specialised forms of production. And it's this last point, the bourgeois appropriation of art as a form of commercial production, which appropriately returns the discussion to Marx:

> An objet d'art creates a public that has artistic taste and is able to enjoy beauty - and the same can be said of any other product. Production accordingly produces not only an object for the subject, but also a subject for the object. (6)

Although Marx's aesthetic theory often slips into an oversimplified fit between the art object and subject or product and consumer, this statement raises the material problems faced by the artist with the decline of direct patronage and the loss of an assured commercial outlet. Who was the new art subject or consumer? What were to be the dominant attitudes towards the metaphysical 'purpose' of art? And, most pressingly, what would be the dominant tastes, the demands to satisfy?

The rebellion against the mannerism of High Renaissance art has often been referred to by art historians as 'the death of style'. But in a crucial sense, artistic style assumed a significance in its construction and elaboration far beyond the ordered days of religious celebration. With the fluidity of the position of the 'free' artist under capitalism and the replacement of patronage by the market, the artist's work was as much a commodity to be bought and sold as any other product of industrial capitalism. It became a commodity, as Arnold Hauser staes, 'in the fullest sense of the word'. And what's interesting for me in the study of bohemianism is the art public's relation to the work of art, and the effects, of either a purchasing acceptance or a critical rejection, on the artist himself. The history, or rather the social history of art reveals this relationship to be always stormy and antagonistic, with many suffering victims of a maligned critical sensibility. Far from a position of the mechanical creation of taste, reflected in a glovelike fit of style to consumption, or a simple reduction of artistic progress since the late eighteenth century to sectional class interests, the history of post-Renaissance 'free' art is at first sight anarchic. With a second sighting it becomes merely complex.

But the parallels with a Marxist analysis of the general development of capitalism are striking. A further strength of Marxist cultural analysis is its insistence, if often only demonstrated rhetorically, on capitalism's inner conditioning dynamic of continuous economic, social and cultural

modernisation. Beyond the cultural dislocations and replacements of the protracted birth of a new system of social relations already stressed, what needs to be emphasised is that Marx depicted this as a continuing process, rooted deep within the character of capitalism. The capitalist system, to survive, requires the constant revolutionising of its methods of operation to permit the necessary elasticity demanded by a mode of production predicated upon continual growth and unrestrained economic activity. A cultural imperative as much as an economic demand, new ideas, new ways of making sense of the world, new ways of seeing are required to perpetuate growth. Old meanings collapse; new ones, modernised and revolutionary, replace them. In Tönnies' rather misleading terminology, 'culture' increasingly gives way before the advance of 'civilisation' or society. The 'individual' is created as traditional, 'holy' forms of belief and action strain and crumble under the inexorable forces of modernisation.

If Marx is seemingly unsteady and often self-contradictory over the essence and origins of the artistic inspiration(7), he is surefooted on what can be called the functional necessity of the artist's gifts of creativity and imagination to the continuing modernisation of the economic structure and cultural sensibility of capitalism. Capitalism devours greedily the gifts the artist and man of letters has to offer; it needs, constantly, the powers of creativity and intellectual innovation so mysteriously bestowed upon a chosen few.

So if Marx has difficulty explaining the origins of

creativity he can at least give its flowering a social context. Most graphically stated in the Communist Manifesto but more soberly appraised in Capital, the idustrial element of the necessary revolutionising power of capitalism runs:

> Modern industry never looks upon and treats the existing form of a process as final. The technical basis of that industry is therefore revolutionary, while all earlier modef of production were essentially conservative. By means of machinery, chemical processes and other methods, it is continually causing changes not only in the technical basis of production, but also in the functions of the labourer, and in the social combinations of the labour-process. (8)

And culturally, capitalism needs new processes, never treating the existing form as a final state. Communication and meaning, as well as industrial production and distribution, must, as practices, be similarly revolutionary. Formally assigned to the creative sphere, the artists dutifully comply - and if the wider culture fails to make sense of the new signs and meanings it's not the artists' fault. Or so they claim.

And the artist comes to care increasingly less and less about this divorce. The doctrine of Art for Art's Sake, and modernist art in general with its widely quoted irresponsibilities and irreverent opacity, refuses to treat the existing artistic order as an ultimate state; it declines to be bound by the conventions and practices of the past, institutionalised and celebrated in the present. It celebrates, rather, innovation and change; change for change's sake; overthrow the old in the name of the new because that's the only way art can maintain

its own dynamism and realistically progress. The only way, in fact, that artists believe art can survive. A suitable slogan could be:

> Art must first be really despised, must be accounted completely useless, before it can again come into its own. (9)

Both artistic production and industrial production can only progressively develop by the continual destruction and reconstruction of their practices. In this sense, then, there is nothing remotely mystical, from a Marxist point of view, about the emergence of Art for Art's Sake and Modernism in the nineteenth century. Art during this period was similarly 'revolutionary', destroying its hereditary links with 'conservative', orthodox modes of artistic production surviving from the past. The apparent distancing of the artists from the fundamental currents of social reality, so despised by Marx, was the only way art, recently designated a profession, could restructure and revitalise its purpose. Only in a conscious, radical break with the institutions supporting its professional and formal status could art shed the irrelevant doctrinal myths there enshrined. Only, in short, by shedding its past could art escape into the modern world. If the artists divined, albeit intuitively and unscientifically, the essential dynamics of capitalist industrial and cultural production, reproducing this ethos in their own practices, and if they alienated the owners of industry (their prospective patrons, the new art public) in the process, this was hardly their fault.

If the new breed of artists was to break the rules of taste, throwing the market and certain critical faculties into a process of permanent revolution, this was understandable: aesthetic rules were nascent and uncertain. But the nineteenth century bourgeoisie and its fawning art establishment were nonetheless often outraged at this irreverent attitude. They were also provoked, in their soft underbelly of pride and morality, by the artists' informal commitment to slovenliness of representation in their work and neglect of decorous presentation in themselves. Yet again the dominant class and art were out of step, and the fault lay entirely with the former's inability to face up to the rigorous standards of cultural modernity it had summoned into being.

Hard work as an end in itself is certainly no virtue. The problem for art has been its pioneering insistence on this simple but profound statement. But it's doubtful whether the art public of patrons and critics threw up their arms in vexed horror only at the apparent transgression of left-over traces of a more rigid Protestant work-ethic. The spirit if not the letter of the sacrosanct demand 'anything that is worth doing at all is worth doing well' was certainly broken, through bourgeois eyes, by ascendent Modernist techniques of painting. The problem was that many artists joyously anticipated G.K.Chesterton's reverse formulation: 'if a thing is worth doing it is worth doing badly'.

But this is not to insinuate a lack of commitment and pride in, for example, the art of Art for Art's Sake: both

qualities were manifestly there - it is simply to acknowledge the rejection of the moral stress on 'worth' in the first statement, parodied by Chesterton's subtle negation of the imperative of doing the correct, acceptable thing at all times. The fault, and a considerable one for the bourgeois art establishment, with such as Whistler and the Impressionists, was that the seemingly irreverent and mocking images in the paintings were taken seriously - as expressing values and qualities beyond the flat surface of the canvas. Demonstrably so when the art lifestyle was suspiciously viewed.

For the contractually 'free' artistic personality had taken freedom to heart - but in a style that was not intended, and certainly not approved, by Marx, the critic Ruskin, and the bourgeoisie at large in western Europe. The dramas of the birth of capitalism's art were seen by a suspicious public as, at best, frivolous hedonism. And hedonism was anathema to the bourgeois class. Art had again broken the rules: it refused to accept that industrial and artistic production were inherently similar; it certainly refused to work in the manner of industrial production. If we return to the Marx of Capital we see:

> The working-day is...not a constant, but a variable quantity. One of its parts, certainly, is determined by the working-time required for the reproduction of the labour-power of the labourer himself. But its total amount varies with the duration of surplus labour. The working-day is, therefore, determinable, but is, per se, indeterminate. (10)

While this is true for the worker under capitalism, it is not

true for his predecessor. One of the cultural shifts capitalism engenders is a marked redefinition of the meanings of work, leisure and time. As Thompson notes, in pre-capitalist periods, when labour regulated its performance by the intransigent demands of 'natural forces', the mode of work is characterised by 'task-orientation', and

> a community in which task-orientation is common appears to show least demarcation between 'work' and 'life'. Social intercourse and labour are intermingled - the working-day lengthens or contracts according to the task - and there is no great sense of conflict between labour and 'passing the time of day'. (11)

But this benign condition, with its organic 'natural human work-rhythms' determined by human needs and natural supply, changes significantly with the sophistication of the industrial division of labour and the direct supervision of work according to the clock and in the interests of pure commodity production. For with the advent of industrial capitalism, time becomes a precious commodity in a sense absent from pre-industrial definitions: measured in productive terms by labour power, it must be bought, sold and consumed according to the general rules of the capitalist market place. The old, 'natural' attitudes and work-practices now come to signify a wilfull wastefulness; in Thompson's words, 'time is now a currency: it is not passed but spent'.

In a culture which in its seriousness of purpose had precious little time, in principle even more than in practice, for play; which thought that all time, whether work or

formally 'non-work', should be put to puritanically responsible use; which crowns its dignitaries with the top-hat to mark its sobriety - to such a culture the behaviour of the artists was offensive in the extreme. Lurking shallowly beneath the pictorial image is the spectre of the unconventional and the dangerous: an ideology which places as much worth on play and irresponsible leisure as on recognisable work; which dresses its followers in garish and resplendent clothes redolent of past, heroic days; and which always clings to its own control of time.

Such are the possibilities of bohemianism, the cultural shifts which marked the transition of the artist's position and disposition under capitalism which will form the basis for the detailed excursion starting in the next chapter. The artist under capitalism always confronts the real and often terminal possibility of the drift into being the 'natural' cultural outsider. Hauser summarises this tendency well when he depicts Flaubert's disdainful view of the artistic temperament:

> He Flaubert hates the bourgeois, but he hates the tramp even more. He knows that there is a destructive element in all artistic acivity, an antisocial, disintegrating force. He knows that the artistic way of life leads to anarchy and chaos and that artistic work is apt to neglect discipline and order, perseverance and steadiness, if only because of the irrational factors involved in it. (12)

In Flaubert's portrayal, the artist always exhibits the tendency towards the 'pathological and the criminal', his presentation in society is one of 'shameless exhibitionism', his favourite

pasttime is the 'undignified trade of playing the fool'.

And Marxism is no less scathing about the bohemian artist's claim to stand apart from society, however politically phrased Marx did not privilege any section of the labour force: the artist, the man of imagination and creative potential, could no more stand apart from or elevate himself above the material and ideological straightjacket of capitalist relations than could the more humble, 'uncreative' factory-based proletarian, less ambiguously chained to the realities of alienation and control. Once the artist enters into the cycle of capitalist labour relations and attempts to sell his product on the market the unique characteristics of his labour power become subsumed beneath the generalised alienating effects of the social structure. Even the act of creation itself, that valued moment when the artist is often popularly and self-consciously supposed to transcend the alienation suffered by other workers by 'losing himself in his work' is illusory or at best tenuous and fleeting.

Hence Marx's criticism of the artistic ideology of self-deceiving isolation and transcendence - the artist's belief that he can not only 'stand apart' from cultural conventions but rise sensually and critically above the objective social relations of capitalism. Marshall Berman summarises the contradiction between wish and reality as 'to surround oneself with a halo in this climate is to try to destroy the danger by denying it.'(13) Brecht, the politically committed exponent of 'popular realism', stated 'man does not become man again by stepping out of the masses but by stepping

back into them'.(14) Marx himself, never noted for his rhetorical moderation, was more cynical and scathing when he referred to the men of letters constituting nineteenth century French bohemia as 'the scum, offal and detritus of society'. (15) One purpose of this contribution to the social history of art and the theory of cultural reproduction and change is to attempt a more systematic, less impassioned, and certainly more sympathetic account of such 'scum'.

For all its analytical strengths, whenever Marxism has turned its critical gaze in the direction of the cultural 'outsider', the shutters crash down, imprisoning reason and leaving only a flood of abuse. Sympathy for the eccentric creative artist, for the bohemian, the Art for Art's Sake follower, and the believer in the 'higher purpose' of art has been notable by its absence within Marxist criticism with its traditional defence of 'socialist realism' and the political responsibilites of art. And understanding, beyond the objective and the structural, of the artist's idiosyncratic position within the flow of capitalist social relations has often come more readily to the mainstream art historian, the writer whose attachment to the ideals and principles of socialist theory is not always easily discernible, than to the orthodox Marxist theorist. One historian of nineteenth century artistic Romanticism, William Gaunt, illustrates this sad long-term trend with this perceptive piece:

> .....the bohemian was a sort of anarchist. He must contrive to live *without a wage or settled* income and therefore was unpractical and imprudent from necessity. The bourgeois was his enemy..

> ..because the bourgeois had an objection to the arts, and to artists, as performing no useful purpose he could understand....The traditional verve, the light, laughter-loving spirit was now the property of the Bohemian and strongly contrasted with the dourness of the philistines who ruled the land and held the money bags. (16)

Even in their more sympathetic moments, Marxist-oriented accounts of bohemianism, its origins and its cultural significance, rarely see beyond the tension and despair of the 'struggling visionary' artistic ideology. Marcuse, caught in one of his infrequent optimistic moments, argues that all art is Art for Art's Sake 'inasmuch as the aesthetic form reveals tabooed and repressed dimensions of reality: aspects of liberation'.(17) But this is not a representative viewpoint. Moreover, it still maintains the stress on the creative bohemian artist ideology as opposition to rigidly socio-economic institutions of capitalism; largely, of course, to the market.

While this theoretical stress certainly makes sense of many of the debates within the history of art its tendencies towards a static form of analysis, reductionist in essence, cannot make sense of the history of a complex ideology such as bohemianism. As stated at the beginning of this chapter, bohemianism is largely a covering term, embracing a multitude of specific, seemingly unrelated and often opposing revolts within art: we can only maintain the concept's use and meaning to explain a materially-grounded style of revolt if theoretical horizons are broadened to conceive the history of art as a contradictory, a radically and consciously questioning process.

Market relations certainly figure prominently in this process: but so, equally, do the social relations of art

education; the rise of the academies and their ancillary functions; the new forms of artistic patronage which mediate between the artist and society; the emergence of the critical talent and its considerable influence; and, what is unfailingly forgotten in Marxism's usual headlong rush towards structural determinants, the artist's relationship to other artists. In other words what is needed is the development of the analysis of the specific institutional forms - within art but external to the artist - against which bohemianism as a cultural force develops. To locate the settings for the emergence of the 'creative', 'rebellious' ideology. We need to specifically focus the 'something about art' that Marxism and other modes of analysis raise within the wider, public, generally antagonistic nature of the artistic experience under capitalism. Otherwise art as a radical and instant indicator of change - 'Modern art has always assumed the values of originality: that the noteworthy will be found in the new'(18) - can only be partially explained.

But to balance the equation and anticipate some later conclusions Gaunt's emphasis on 'the light laughter-loving spirit' that separates the artistic personality from the bourgeois personality in the nineteenth century should be recalled: if for no other reason than that bohemianism has been as much a solution to the problem of leisure, that formally 'free' state opposing 'work', of such concern to the dominant class. The power to define the work/leisure equation has been one of the lines of defence in the bohemian attack on the formal 'commonsense' rationality that characterises

capitalist social reality. In a sense the artist offers the fragility of a 'private' world against the strength of the social, public domain. If, as Peter Berger, Brigitte Berger and Hansfried Kellner suggest, the individual is given 'a kind of "do-it-yourself" universe'(19) to construct in the private world, it is also true that such 'solutions' rarely satisfactorily overcome the division. The links between the two worlds remain too strong: the institutions, relationships and, more fundamentally, the meanings of the private world continue to be tied, if not always transparently, to the state, the market and ultimately to the realities of the organisation of production. The nature of the growth in the ideological split between the private and the social and public lies in the strengthening of capitalism and its cultural modernity; in the emergence of civil society and the new, organic intellectuals whose ranks include the 'free', 'creative' artists. As Gramsci states:

> The capitalist entrepreneur creates alongside himself the industrial technician, the specialist in political economy, the organisers of a new culture, of a new legal system, etc.(20)

Its real transcendence presumably lies elsewhere, beyond the limitations of the cultural form. For most Marxists at least, it certainly cannot reside in the self-imposed isolation of self-consciously privileged sections of society, the 'organisers of a new culture', however grand their pretensions to the halo.

But such politically and socially motivated declamations cannot deny that in a real - although non-Marxist - sense

the bohemian artist does 'escape' these limitations; to 'lose himself' in the unique character of his labour to the point where rigid distinctions between work and leisure break, and where formal divisions of private and public at least blur at the edges. This is a central theme in the history of bohemianism - the refined history of counter-cultural 'moments' - that I shall depict. It is part of the bohemian assault on bourgeois, philistine sensibilities; which refuses to acknowledge the bourgeois canons of success as worthwhile, and which refuses, in whatever its political shape or form, the validity of external, 'non-artistic' taste as in any sense relevant to the work of the artist. Success for some inevitably becomes the sign of actual artistic inferiority. The original artistic bohemian prefigures, in this sense, the jazz musicians of Becker's Outsiders.

But it's the certainty of aesthetic vision, the summary rejection of bourgeois taste - whether in the 'proletarian bohemia' of Courbet or the aristocratic parodies of Aestheticism - which separates the bohemian from the philistine and those of mechanical aesthetic sensibilites, and which unites, under a common flag, the disparate movements and styles to come. In terms of the artistic process itself, the bohemian artist fights against those facets of the 'modernity' of a capitalist culture that, whatever its aesthetic pretensions, defines art clinically and neatly as 'just another commodity'. In his conscious questioning and the struggle against the formal institutions of art, he attacks the traditional conventions embodied in, and always shaping the acceptable version

of what art should and should not be. Content becomes inreasingly sacrificed to style; a concept that can now be reintroduced into the sociological discourse in a more meaningful, less extravagany sense. The roots of the bohemian style lay partly in the nature of the artistic sense of purpose and partly in the opposition between this purpose and the institutions, social and artistic, which it confronts.

Marxism, in its variegated forms, has continued to underestimate the powers and subtleties of this historical process: the ways in which artistic revolt surfaces to confront a conventional public establishment only to become, in turn, absorbed into the heart of respectability and convention - provoking further responses as art takes the capitalist ethos of permanent change at its word. In this sense, the differences between, for example, Ruskin and Whistler can be located within a common historical and cultural theme. The personal world of the creative, individual artist, thrown-up in the cultural upheavals of capitalism's birth, continues to confront the social and public institutions around him. Unfortunately, the sheer scepticism of much of the Marxist tradition of cultural studies in general and the social history of art in particular almost openly invites the confusions, the absences and the neglect to which I pointed in Centre theory.

So it's away from the rhetorical preamble, to a more detailed study of the first collective expression of the 'icy loneliness' of art, to the origins of the certainty of aesthetic vision in Romanticism that I can now turn.

Notes and Reference: Chapter Four

1. Marx and Engels, 1976, p.44

2. Fischer, 1963, p.49

3. ibid. p.49

4. Marx and Engels, op.cit., p.144

5. Berger, 1972, p.110

6. Marx and Engels, op.cit., p.129

7. Compare Marx's quote on Milton with the following from Capital I:

> We pre-suppose labour in a form that stamps it as exclusively human. A spider conducts operations that resemble those of a weaver...But what distinguishes the worst architect from the best of bees is this, that the architect raises his structure in imagination before he erects it in reality.

The metaphysical haze is still evident, but the convinced use of the analogy is dropped. Confusing.

8. Marx, 1970, p.457

9. Philippe Runge, cited in Weidlé, 1948, p.30

10. Marx (1970), op.cit., p.223

11. Thompson, 1967.

12. Hauser, 1962 (vol.4), p.73

13. Berman, 1977, p.70

14. Brecht, 1977, p.69

15. Marx, 1973, p.197

16. Gaunt, 1975, p.11

17. Marcuse, 1979, p.19

18. Buford, 1981.

19. Berger, Berger and Kellner, 1974, p.167

20. Gramsci. 1971, p.5

CHAPTER FIVE

> In nearly all the great periods of art the choice of subject has not been left to the painter. His employer - abbot, baron, or monarch - determined for him whether he should earn his bread by making cloisters bright with choirs of saints, painting coats of arms on leaves of romances, or decorating presence chambers with complimentary mythology....
>
> John Ruskin.

> From now on increasingly the work he tackled appeared to him in the guise of a problem to be solved by his own personal efforts, at his own cost and risk, and whose happy solution would be all his own doing....
>
> Wladimir Weidlé, The Dilemma of the Arts.

> He rebelled against the idea, exemplified in the philosophic world of Descartes and the mechanical world of Newton, that personal experience and personality were secondary, and counted for little, that only the mind really mattered....
>
> Allen Leepa, Anti-Art and Criticism.

The spirit of Romanticism confronted the problems facing artistic practice noted in the last chapter. Objectively 'free' from patronage, the artist's purpose and potential expectations simultaneously became hazy and ill-defined in a period when cultural and social upheavals were collapsing traditional assumptions and assurances. The 'free' artist had now not only to confront a new social class's scrambled and incomplete aesthetic sensibilites, he had to establish a market rapport with a class, the only potential purchaser of his product,

which was no longer certain of the very purpose of art. A class which initially questioned the use-value of art; but which came increasingly to assess the ideological safety of art, searching the art product for dangerous moral and political tendencies. The artist still had to produce - and sell - to live: but how would this new art public react?

The Romantic spirit, anticipating Marx, pondered the problem of the artist's relationship to his product, and considered the nature of artistic activity itself, but often withdrew from the more overtly political implications of this questioning. The Romantic refused to pass or even delegate control of his creative power to alien hands or its control to alien purse strings; he refused, categorically, to accept that the product of artistic labour either could or should oppose its creator; he refused, although in a more subtle and ambiguous manner, to subordinate art's essential qualities to external demands. The artist himself, whether politically committed or the fervent follower of Art for Art's Sake, would be the final, effectively the only arbiter of what to produce, by what mode, and for what purpose.

These are not historically specific variables, to be plied back and forth between seemingly isolated artistic movements: as constraints, motivations and explicit attitudes they characterise the totality of Romanticism's hold over the artistic mind from the late-eighteenth century until today. Bernice Martin recognises, as other commentators have done, the continuing cultural significance of Romantic ideology,

and she correctly the basis of hippie ideology, its motifs, language and general style in this historical trajectory. As I shall show, the attempted cultural redefinitions of the hippie counter-culture in the late 1960s were redolent of two centuries of struggle over the aesthetic sign. But the crucial omission is the institutional base of this trajectory: to remedy the absences, to give a fuller account of the ideological antecedents of the hippie counter-culture, will take me initially into the domain of German Romantic philosophy and then into the debates centred around French artistic movements. By the nineteenth century France or more accurately Paris had become the unquestioned centre of the art of the modern world: it was here that Romantic ideas were most lucidly, coherently and notoriously expressed in terms of artistic practice; and it was here that the changing institutional forms of the modern art world were most significantly worked through and tried.

Romanticism was the first coherent rebellion within art and for Art against Society. By the close of the eighteenth century its fire had captured the European imagination, uniting the legions of 'free' artists against the formality and containment of external demands. In its various addresses, styles and poses it was the first direct and self-assured revolt against the social, economic and cultural rationality of capitalism and its philosophical realisation in the theories of the Enlightenment and Utilitarianism.

Marilyn Butler, in Romantics, Rebels and Reactionaries, comments:

> The most obvious feature common to all the arts of Western nations after 1750 was the refusal to validate the contemporary social world...The strongest single tendency of late eighteenth century art was to reject the ephemeral in favour of the essential, and the search for purity often took the form of a journey into the remote.(1)

Against the aridity and imposed social rationalism of the period the Romantics offered the unfettered imagination and the inalienable primacy of the artist's perception. Against the notion of man as an economic animal in his drives and motivations, they offered the philosophical anthropology of Rousseau. Where capitalism's rationality demanded formal responsibility in the name of a higher, social and economic purpose, they countered with the violent, the grand, the mystical and the remote. In Bertrand Russell's words:

> Revolt of solitary instincts against social bonds is the key to the philosophy, the politics and the sentiments, not only of what is commonly called the romantic movement, but of its progeny down to the present day. (2)

In a claimed triumph of individual heart over the impositions of social reason, Romanticism countered 'society' with a firm belief in the fundamental organic properties of 'life', believing 'the natural growth of "life" will be set free from the artificial (or "mechanical") constraints of "civilisation".'(3) Perhaps more muted and less visible in the twentieth century than with such as Morris and Ruskin, the mystical properties of an abstract but always vibrant life force remain close to the ideological and practical heart of the creative artist.

But as Romanticism developed directly from Rousseau's assertion of heart over reason, it also developed, more powerfully and more tellingly, from German idealist philosophy. While British philosophy maintained its traditional posture of insularity during the early Romantic period, preferring to concentrate its efforts in the fairly single-minded pursuit of the Utilitarian dream, it at least remained unsullied by the apparent unity of opposites represented by the philosophy of Schiller, Schlegel and Schopenhauer. For once, though, contradictions and confusions are not to be shied away from: in the varied endowment of Schiller and his contemporaries resides the grains of Romantic detachment, involvement and aesthetic perception which have sifted through to inform the artistic constructions and replacements and other, wider cultural critiques of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Schiller's grand claim in the late eighteenth century was that Art and only Art could raise Man from the base profanity of his natural condition to a transcendent state of moral and aesthetic perfection. A demand for the complete sovereignty of Art over both the abstract imperatives of Reason and the more concrete constraints of social necessity, Schiller's theory was innovatory in establishing, or at least recognising the essential 'something' about art that willingly if mysteriously lifted, via the 'aesthetic impulse', its practice and practitioners above the mundanity of other disciplines and placed them on the summit of Mankind. Tacitly acknowledging the 'freedom' of the new artist, Schiller's celebratory sermon on the divine mission of art openly ignored

the possibilities of the social conditioning of the 'aesthetic impulse' and transltade the artist's revised position into a doctrine of independence and unashamed individual creativity. Schiller sets the dramatic backdrop for art's increasingly assured autonomy of purpose and expression throughout the following two centuries. It is the first, certainly the most influential statement of superiority: preaching that unbridled passion and primitive emotions are always artistically preferable to conventional wisdom, Schiller's statement freed the artist, in an intellectual sense, from imposed restrictions. He could wallow in the certainty of his vision.

But it should be remembered that Schiller was not investing art with a quality of social irresponsibility; nor was he granting the artist a licence to behave in a raffish, decadent manner. Underlying the intellectual, aesthetic freedom and the practical licence remains the implicit morality of a desired higher state of humanity. But what Schiller is stressing, and what is significant in terms of the development of the Romantic thrust, is the necessity of shedding any manner of state control and social conventionality in the pursuit of the higher state. The early Romantic spirit nurtured twin imperatives of freedom: from state and social restrictions in the name of Art's revised message; and from formal aesthetic ties in the pursuit of a new, humanitarian ethos. Convincing at the time, the new art gradually came to blur the distinction between means and ends; often forgetting the latter while revelling in the newly-legitimate spaces of the former. By

its timeless stress on the artistic sensibility's superiority over the bourgeois and philistine cultural and aesthetic faculties, Schiller's legacy influenced its followers in curious and contradictory ways. Commitment and Art for Art's Sake, self-righteous morality and strident immorality - all the tensions and oppositions, in fact, pointed to in the previous chapter - are embraced.

Within the spaces of early Romanticism also wandered Schlegel; a philosopher whose drinking exploits have been immortalised by Monty Python, but who is perhaps equally noteworthy for his development of Schiller's themes of artistic autonomy, vitality, and anti-rationalism. And in Schlegel is seen the emergence of an ideal that was to continuously reappear, sometimes complementing, sometimes opposing the received picture of the Romantic spirit, but always shaping the dialectic of art. He takes Schiller's themes further: backwards in time, into the Middle Ages. In the ideal of the medieval craftsman, and in the great memorials to his craft such as the Gothic cathedrals of Europe, Schlegel encountered the unity and fulfillment of the Romantic dream. The true unity of society and art; but where, in the mood of Thompson's later appraisal of the Romantic essence, society always equals more than the mechanical and forced coherence of the mass; where it equals, fundamentally and without tension, the organic mix of individual purpose and social purpose. Where individual creativity and, in this sense, political and religious authority are not exclusive and opposite but fused in a moral and aesthetic

consensus of higher purpose.

Schlegel, as Morris was later to attempt, countered early nineteenth century rationality and secular economic materialism with the dream of a past social, cultural and above all artistic utopia. In the practical sense, Schlegel's beliefs imposed a demand for the reworking of the mode of artistic practice; they demanded at least the equality of status of the artistic personality and the materials and purpose of artistic practice. It refused the mannered subordination of personality, with all this term implies, to either purpose or material. It rejected, in other words, the primacy of tradition and conventional style. In a philosophical sense, it stressed the primacy of the will: a concern nearest and dearest to the heart of Kant and German idealism. For where Romanticism's debts to Rousseau lay in the latter's assertion of passion and the commanding powers of the heart, its development of the mysteries of idealist philosophy was to focus a further strand in art's progression.

Kantianism limited the possibilities of knowledge. By marking tight epistemological demarcation lines between the distinct worlds of the phenomenal and the noumenal, Kant attempted to create a space in which individual will could negotiate a compromised existence alongside reason. If we can only truthfully 'know' the phenomenal world of sense experience, never penetrating beyond into the deeper world of essences and 'things as they are', we can nevertheless 'think' the things of this latter, noumenal world. In other words, although our mental sensory apparatus can never prove the veracity of

ethical and moral propositions we can nevertheless constantly maintain a faith in their existence: indeed, making sense of experience, for Kant, demands a reconciliation, in faith and will, of the two worlds.

The room Kant allows the concept of individual will in creating a viable, living cultural world is important in aesthetics in general and particularly important in its translation into doctrines such as Art for Art's Sake. A significant name in this process is Arthur Schopenhauer - convinced pessimist, critic of Hegel, and strident defender of the powers of the will.

By making the Kantian point that questions of aesthetics, taste and artistic quality have precious little epistemological foundation in the world we can know, Schopenhauer aims a swipe at the art moralists and those convinced of Art's quality being grounded in an accurate and truthful representation of an ethical vision and moral purpose. Art cannot privilege itself epistemologically and delve into the unknowables of the noumenal world; but nor, by the same criteria, could external moral, social and aesthetic biases impinge upon Art. So what's left for the aesthetic faculty is a process of self-reflection: Art focusses upon its own qualities, inherent to its practice and logically unassailable: the artist justifies himself in his own terms, free from the constraints of external purpose. Defining the purpose of Art, in Schopenhauer's universe, is solely the responsibility of the artist, and in practical terms the purpose so defined is the act of creation itself.

So even in such a brief introduction to the philosophical spirit of Romanticism, what is apparent is a multiplicity of designs almost equal to the stylistic varieties of the bohemian artistic ideology it engenders. But from this maze emerge some tangible threads to bind the disparate elements loosely together: a determination to rigourously and consistently question the external demands made on art, if not always to reject them out of hand; a conviction that the artistic perception is always privileged in some way; and the belief that change, expressed through a radical and thoroughgoing suspicion of inbred tradition and conventionalism, is a vital artistic quality. As a 'modern' worker, the bohemian, the cultural 'outsider' artist who consciously works within the parameters of the Romantic tradition, is not really concerned with Marxist problems of the ownership of labour power and its product: he thinks he knows to whom they belong - to himself. His questioning falls elsewhere.

But as a 'modern' worker, the artist locates his adoption or rejection of the spirit of Romanticism always within the context of the essentially sociological changes mentioned in the last chapter: he may not acknowledge the same questions as Marx, and usually readily dismisses the Marxist solution, but he could never easily ignore or escape their objective consequences. Philosophy may often be vacuous in content and vacant in formulation, but it never exists in a void. In fine contrast, sociology, although often itself vacuous, generally acknowledges the importance of radically altered

social conditions. But as was also stated in the last chapter, the dependence of the clearly linked Sociology's of Art, Knowledge and Culture upon the paradigmatic questions and solutions offered by the Marxist tradition has negated the considerable force of the bohemian ideology and its contrived reworkings of the Romantic spirit. On the other hand, of course, the art historians have rarely shown more than a cursory interest in the social context of art. Following on from my declared intention of blending the best of the two worlds, I believe the key to the continuing cultural significance as well as to the sociology of bohemianism should proceed as follows.

Firstly, Romanticism engenders certain cultural, artistic attitudes, not always complementary: a heavy stress on the notion of creativity coupled with an emphasis on change and continual innovation; a belief that past society and art can hold the key to present artistic practice; a belief, clearly linked to the ideology of creativity, that the artistic perception and the private practice of the artist stands apart from external influence.

Secondly, these artistic ideologies are focussed, concentrated and dispersed by the market and its attendant features, the artist's relationship to other artists, and the problem of making political sense of a politicised social world.

In other words, the 'modern' artist of the nineteenth century and onwards continually confronts an artistic world on which the social never ceases to impinge, make demands, and

attempt to shape in non-artistic ways. Facing the growing 'problem situations' of what to produce, by what means and for whom; how to relate to fellow artists in a field of cultural practice increasingly professional with the growth of formal specialised training; and how to make sense of the social world in general - facing these, the bohemian artist consciously articulates elements of the Romantic critique. All modern artists work implicitly in step with the Romantic tune - defending the sovereign rights of artistic perception and celebrating the power of creativity - but the bohemian artist works beyond this level, beyond the implicit letter of Romantic law through to the core of the early spirit of refusal. He makes sense of the problems the aesthetic and finacial perceptions pose by, among other things, imparting a radical significance to the past and historical lore; by making change and continual innovation a virtue in itself; by making his product less culturally accessible; and by fighting the tendency towards the public 'socialisation' of art by rejecting such trends totally or attempting to redefine their purpose.

> The Devil holds our strings in puppetry!
> In objects vile we find attraction;
> Each day we sink nearer perdition,
> Unhorrified, through rank obscurity.
> Baudelaire, Flowers of Evil.

The first bohemia solidified in Paris somewhere between 1830 and 1840: the decisive date probably being 1832, the year of the city's uprising. It was then that the themes of Romantic philosophy found a first organised public face and established

the styles of argument that were to structure the bohemian response on both the continent and in England.

Celebrated by Victor Hugo in Les Miserables, Paris uprising, this 'terrible event', Richard Miller claims, 'split the artistic/political revolt of the romantics into its constituents'.(4) The social reality of 1830s Paris split the as yet young Romantic critique into, on the one hand, the political activists who could no longer find solutions only in art and who re-formed around such as Comte and Saint-Simon, and on the other, the committed Romantics-who drifted into the camp dominated by the formidable talents and personalities of Gautier and Baudelaire.

Gautier, the critic and 'man of slogans', coined one in particular I've already mentioned: the doctrine, the attitude, the style of artistic life of L'art pour l'art, Art for Art's Sake. And with the poetic expression, and public exhibition, of Art for Art's Sake by Baudelaire, the split between the types of artistic perception and commitment became complete and irreconcilable. There could be little common ground between the radicals and socialists, the socially committed 'topical' commentators such as Balzac who took the messages and lessons of 1832 seriously, and the followers of Gautier and Baudelaire who later, following the publication of the latter's Les Fleurs du Mal, were to revel in the bizarre title of 'Decadents'.

In his book on Baudelaire, Gautier states:

> ...if certain sides of his nature were such as could be satisfied by direct, and not traditional,

> representation of ugliness, or at least of contemporary triviality, his aspirations for Art, elegance, luxury, and beauty led him towards a superior sphere. (5)

Baudelaire, who had the most intense admiration for the French Romantic painter Delacroix, declared that modernity was not a question of subject matter but feeling, a 'way of seeing and understanding'(6). But Arnold Hauser, in capturing the spirit of this first consciously constructed bohemia, reveals the social dangers the artist faced in adhering to what amounted to a private, solely artistic definition of art:

> L'art pour l'art sprang from Romanticism and represents one of the weapons in its struggle for freedom; it is the result and to some extent the sum-total of romantic aesthetic theory. What was originally merely a revolt against the classical rules has become a revolt against all external ties, an emancipation from all non-artistic, moral and intellectual values. For Gautier artistic freedom already means independence from the criteria of the middle class, a lack of interest in its utilitarian ideals and the refusal to co-operate in the realisation of these ideals. For the romantics L'art pour l'art becomes the ivory tower in which they shut themselves off from all practical affairs. They buy the peace and superiority of a purely contemplative attitude at the price of an understanding with the prevailing order. (7)

The classic question, drawn from the Romantic critique and henceforth dividing the critic and layman from arguably the majority of practising artists, is raised: does the work of art find its meaning in itself and its own coherence, or is it to be judged by external, almost invariably social criteria? Romanticism sprang partly from a sense of injured disenchantment with maudlin traditionalism, and it eschewed classical artistic

conventions. With Art for Art's Sake the artist's demand for the primacy of his creative powers couples with a powerful stress on the complete autonomy of the artistic enterprise and becomes, in a sense, the purest expression of the Romantic ideology. For Marx, the lover of Balzac, Art for Art's Sake, utopian and morally reprehensible in its declared isolation, was nothing less than political poison.

The forum for the prophets of the first bohemia was the café. The artists, predominantly well-heeled and youthful, drawn to this flourishing form of intellectual enclave were attracted by the romantic visions of lifestyle Gautier's doctrine of Art for Art's Sake seemed to lend a perverse legitimation to. Before the 1830s the young romantic could have discovered few 'organised', institutional outlets for his rebellious refusal: with the tentative informal institutionalisation of the Romantic critique in the early bohemian haunts, the pull of the societies and coteries, regally ordered by such figures as Gautier, Hugo and Baudelaire, was strong. Now the accepted, bourgeois standards of dress, speech and general behaviour could be flouted publicly: in the honourable, poetic, and always private name of Art.

This wish to publicly offend, to express a sense of rebellion against the values of French bourgeois society, is a key to the underlying character of the first bohemia. Hauser notes it

> was originally no more than a demonstration against the bourgeois way of life. It consisted of young artists and students, who were mostly the sons of well-to-do people, and in whom the

> opposition to the prevailing society was usually a product of mere youthful exuberance and contrariness. (8)

The world's first middle-class youth sub-culture? More realistically, and Hauser's mildly deprecating comments notwithstanding, these early bohemians took the first reasonably affluent steps towards establishing the modern artistic behavioural mode. If their estrangement from their 'parent culture' was often temporary, abandoned in favour of a return to bourgeois security, it was consciously chosen and acted, and at the time unique in its qualities. Dilettantes perhaps, but committed Romantics in their vision of Art nonetheless.

But their credibility as 'true bohemians' could not have been aided by the sudden wave of middle-class passion for the 'low life' that quickly overtook café society. Bohemia and the bohemian artistic atmosphere and milieu had become fashionable: the private world of introspection and debate of the artistic coteries had become dangerously public.

Two reasons for this trend, which must have disturbed and threatened the sensibilities of Baudelaire's more fanatical disciples, can be readily discerned.

Firstly, although in the eighteenth century the French bourgeoisie 'gradually took possession of all the instruments of culture'(9), after the early 1830s there was a new middle-class suspicion of art and the artist. As we've seen earlier, prior to this period the artist could be relied upon, through the demands and responsibilities of his patronised position, to behave himself and not threaten the dominant worldview in

and conceivable way. In the post-1832 world, however, the artist is regarded with a deeply suspicious eye, and his product searched accordingly for visible signs of partiality not coinciding with the preferred image of the bourgeois world. Art's creative talents may have been unconsciously contributing to the solidification of capitalism's social ideologies but, rightly or wrongly, they were perceived by a concerned middle-class as being at least potentially subversive in a period of social upheaval. To remedy the tension, the first stage of reconciliation between the mutually antagonistic interests of 'free art' and responsible society is accomplished: the artist is actively encouraged to isolate himself, to remain remotely distant from the worldly concerns of society and politics:

> The middle class makes L'art pour l'art its own; it stresses the ideal nature of art and the high, superpolitical status of the artist. (10)

The 'free artist' is permitted to transgress the formal demarcation lines between work, leisure and responsibility so long as he shows no committment. As I shall show later when I consider British art education and its conflicts with the Romantic spirit, Design and applied art occupied a totally different place in the affections of the middle-class.

But secondly, and probably more in tune with the French bourgeoisie's own reasons for searching out the illicit delights of bohemia, there was the success of Murger's romanticising Scenes de la Boheme. Richard Miller:

> Quite unintentionally, his Scenes de Boheme

> ravaged Bohemia of such innocence it had, making it once more a romantic symbol, tourist attraction, a hunting ground, and a Camelot to the Bourgeoisie everywhere....(11)

Murger's bohemians were mildly deranged innocents, picturesque but harmless. Scenes de la Boheme, which permitted Murger the chance to desert the cafes and haunts of Parisian bohemia for the bourgeois refinement of the Right Bank, offered a sentimentalised view of the artist's existence which did much to attract the French middle-class while suitably placating their fears about the radical potentials of that existence. The bohemian milieu it depicted was an example of where a doctrine of artistic refusal and aesthetic rebellion positively mirrored the political interests of the dominant social class. A situation in marked contrast to the 'second generation bohemian' followers of Courbet; far from 'rich kid dilettantes', Courbet's circle marked the shift to the truly struggling artist - those who were forced 'to choose between art and the necessities of life'.(12)

> He conjured out of privacy, out of the obscurity of a small-town funeral, an imagery which was public and political. Not just art that caused an outcry, but images which undermined the bourgeois sense of what was art and what was bourgeoisie....
>
> T.J.Clark on Courbet, The Absolute Bourgeois.

The first bohemians were primarily literary figures; those of the next generation preferred painters as their guides and mentors. With this shift in artistic preference and focus

the nature of bohemianism qualitatively changes: from the middle-class dilettante to the 'artistic proletariat' - an existence now organised around the social principles of realism or 'militant naturalism' which is no sense a stylistic charade. Some, such as Courbet himself, may have viewed the exile that Parisian bohemia entailed as a strategic political defeat. But it was an estrangement forced, now, through the very nature of their artistic practice. Art had become political: it had renounced its previous allegiance to the ivory tower. Only Baudelaire, who had befriended the young Courbet, appeared to bridge the generation gap; and not always in readily accessible ways.

In 1865 Pierre-Joseph Proudhon claimed:

> It is against this degrading theory of art for art's sake that Courbet and, with him, the whole school called realist up until the present, boldly arise and energetically protest. (13)

A full social history of the art of this period would embrace the effects on such as Courbet, Champfleury, Millet, Daumier and others of the tremendous social upheavals and protests resounding through Paris during the late 1840s and early 1850s. Such painters had certainly been involved in various ways in the 1848 revolutions and, for example, Courbet's 1855 Realist Manifesto was constructed largely in terms of the political manifestos of this period.

But what is more interesting about Courbet here is his circle's reaction against the existing artistic formulae of the day.

Courbet was the convinced man of the people, a 'natural leader' who experienced little difficulty in attracting a coterie of converts to the new artistic style. But one of the quirks of Courbet's realism is its attempt to create an art devoid of style: devoid of superfluous flourish and romanticising embellishment in its attack on Art for Art's Sake's attempt to closet art away in an aesthetic world divorced from politics and society. Art for Art's Sake had certainly rejected the well-worn classical conventions, but the new realism attempted to escape from all artistic conventions. In its simplest definition of painting, Realism demanded verisimilitude, an overriding commitment to the accurate presentation of the facts of the objective, external world. It eschewed all forms of symbolism, stripping away formal illusion from art in the name of experience, and metaphysics from experience in the name of the science of politics. Courbet is the classic positivist:

> I hold that painting is an essentially concrete art, and can exist only for the representation of things both real and existing. It is an altogether physical language, which, for its words, makes use of all visible objects. An abstract object, invisible or nonexistent, does not belong to the domain of painting. Imagination in art consists of finding the most complete expressions for an existing thing, but never in imagining or creating this object itself.(14)

Courbet's artist, anticipating the view taken to its extreme with Impressionism, can only paint the visible and the factual, that existing in the material here and now. The classical art of the past, drawing upon the myths and legends of the ancient

world, could hold no legitimate interest for the artist of the mid-nineteenth century. And in this very important sense, Courbet and his followers are quintessential modern artists in the Romantic mould: art can never be taught from the manners and styles of the past; it must always be the application of personal creative faculties to the material world. John Berger, commenting on Courbet's at the time radical vision of art, and on his reception in the Parisian Salons, notes of Burial at Ornans:

> He had refused the function of art as the moderator of appearance, as that which enobles the visible. Instead, he had painted life-size, on 21 square metres of canvas, an assembly of figures at a graveside, which announced nothing except: This is how we appear. And precisely to the degree to which the art public in Paris received this announcement from the countryside, they denied its truth, calling it vicious exaggeration. (15)

But why should this new 'styleless' art antagonise the Parisian bourgeoisie who had, after all, accomodated the lurid poetry and practices of the first bohemians? Partly the answer lay in the objects Courbet chose to depict: in his expansion of the artistic field of vision to include such subjects traditionally considered taboo as the poor, the dispossessed, and those who were, at best, marginal to the values of French society.

But the answer cannot wholly reside at this level: as I've stated, Courbet rejected the trite stylising and overt sentimental romanticising of the external world, even though he was deeply committed to its political change, and sympathetic towards its obvious sufferers. If Courbet told 'the

truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth', his imperatives for so doing were as much epistemological as moral and social.

As such, his paintings did not contain any blatant political 'messages' that could instantly offend the delicate sensibilities of the bourgeoisie - even during a social period when such sensibilities would be at their most critically acute. The key to the outrage initially provoked by Courbet's paintings, and thus to their initial commercial failure, lies not in what they said, but in what they conspicuously did not say: in their failure to stylise, to romantically translate the social realities of the time into 'safe' images, the French middle-class, again deeply suspicious of art following the upheavals of 1848, saw an implicit political tendentiousness and involvement being expressed, 'a threat to existing values and power structures as menacing as the throwing of a bomb.'(16) The bourgeois art public's critical and commercial rejection of Realism thus went beyond the boundaries of questionable 'taste', beyond the paintings' 'indecency', 'obscenity' and 'ugliness', into the perceived dangers of depicting man in his raw state of nature. For the bourgeoisie the dangerous spirit of Rousseau had been invoked; a spirit which again opposed the dominant rationality and way of seeing with something almost primeval in its simplicity and honesty.

Courbet, Millet and Daumier, the central artistic figures of the 'militant bohemia' of the 'Bourgeois Empire', were thrown headlong and wholesale into the relative political wasteland of café society through their refusal to adopt the

common conventions of artistic practice, and through their refusal to endorse the middle-class's 'passive' view of art. Courbet's motto, 'faire de l'art vivant', was unacceptable despite its sincerity and social morality. (17)

But were the militants 'realistic' in their vision of art, with its purpose located on the defiantly social arm of the Romantic critique? Could they have turned art, and more importantly bohemia with its rich legacy of Art for Art's Sake - equally defiant in its social isolation - into a responsible and fertile political forum? Although they had not chosen their fate amongst the alternative artistic platforms of bohemia (they had, though, chosen the view of art which they must have known would consign them to initial poverty and social marginality), their position as 'outsiders' compounded the problems faced by the politically-inspired artist. Hauser comments with a degree of cynicism:

> ...However new this social outlook is, and however much talk there is in Courbet's circle about the humanitarian aims and political tasks of art, bohemianism is and remains an heir to aestheticising romanticism. It often ascribes a significance to art which it did not have even in the most exalted theories of the romantics and makes a prophet out of a confusedly chattering painter and a historical event out of the exhibition of an unsaleable picture. (18)

But despite such mild denigration, Courbet's influence on the development of nineteenth century French art was vast. In his audacious posturings about what new tasks art could and could not perform, and in his thoroughgoing critique of the art of the past he charted fresh paths for artistic practice

to follow: particularly so in his influence on Impressionism; on Cézanne's first steps towards an abstract modernism; and on Whistler's rediscovery of pure aestheticism.

'Militant bohemia', the heir to radical social Romantic ideology, embodies the tensions and oppositions within modern artistic practice to a far more intense degree than its chic and stylised predecessor. They similarly break social and artistic conventions, and offend critical and moral sensibilities in the interests of a new, redefined artistic practice: but, and it remains a substantial qualifier, theirs is a redefinition committed to a social rather than inner, aesthetic purpose. Although never questioning the celebrated private, individual creativity of the modern artist, the generation of the 1840s and 1850s adopts a critical public face. Unrealistic its political redefinitions may have been, but they had the considerable consequence of throwing Courbet and his friends to the mercy of an antagonistic market. In marked contrast to their predecessors and, to a lesser extent, to the Impressionists, the Realists turned outwards for a solution to problems of the market, politics and individualism.

By the time of Courbet, Paris was undisputedly centre of the art world. Harrison C.White and Cynthia A.White, in Canvases and Careers: Institutional Change in the French Painting World, give the following reasons: the concentration of dealers with an international clientele; the city's international

scope in the recruitment of art students; the higher prices of contemporary French painting compared to the contemporary painting of other countries; and the dominance of France, and Paris in perticular, in forming the language and criteria of art journalism. The first and the last of these factors are perhaps the most significant: it was the fact that they were new, and that Paris was the centre of what was new in the institutional world of art that consolidated its position as art capital. Paris showed the rest of the art world the way in organising the:

> growth of markets and dealers, increase in journals and critics, new variants in ideology, direct action by the growing mass of painters themselves as in organising group shows, and so on. (19)

These points will be taken up, and their influence on the British art world explored at a later stage. Their importance here is that the first generation of modern artists to feel the effects of the institutional changes was the Impressionists.

The principles of Realism which Courbet had striven against the critical odds to spread did not so much die as become transformed with the rise of Impressionism. The artistic eye remained an uncomplicated camera; what it perceived and focussed on remained distanced from the readily acceptable. 'Impressionism,' as Ernst Fischer states, 'turned its eyes upon the present day, contemplating ordinary things without reticence, even though they might be ugly'.(20) Again painting was mirroring the strength of empiricism in philosophy,

depicting and privileging only that which could be directly and unequivocally experienced. But its interpretation of this epistemological position within art accounts, firstly, for the movement's vivid stylistic divergences from the art of Courbet and 'militant naturalism', and secondly reveals some of the reasons for the social estrangement and initial artistic marginality of the Impressionist artist.

The central avenue to commercial success in the Parisian art world was the Salon exhibitions, until 1881 under the joint control of the Academy and the state. Some of the painters later to don the Impressionist mantle, most notably Monet and Sisley, had actually enjoyed some degree of critical success in the exhibitions in their early careers. But if the watershed for Monet, Renoir, Sisley, Pissarro and the other members of the post-Courbet generation was to be their wholesale rejection by the selection jury in 1867, a foretaste of what was to come was the reception of Manet's Olympia, hung at the 1865 Salon. Tim Clark recounts that only four of the sixty reviewing critics offered anything approaching favourable comments. More than this, there was, according to Clark, a real absence of concrete critical commentary:

> ...if we apply the test not merely of approval, but of some sustained description of the object in hand - some effort at controlled attention to particulars, some ordinary mobilisation of the resources of criticism in 1865 - then a response to Olympia simply does not exist. (21)

Olympia's structure, with its plastic effects and 'incorrect' draughting techniques was, we must conclude, outside of any available critical discourses. Its most visible impact was

in the savagely biting caricatures of the painting published in contemporary art and 'society' journals. But why?

Matisse once asked Pissarro, 'what is an Impressionist?' The most committed exponent of the style elusively replied, 'An Impressionist is a painter who never paints the same picture, who always paints a new picture.'(22) Deceptively simple, even obvious, Pissarro's answer marks the Impressionists as both extreme empiricists, as ardent believers in the 'raw data of experience', and as the latter-day followers of the philosophy of Heraclitus. Every moment, every phenomenon captured by the Impressionist camera was a once-in-a-lifetime, never repeated experience and sensation. It implied, as Robert Hughes succinctly states, 'ideally, an Impressionist landscape should have taken only as long to paint as it took to see.'(23) From the belief in the essential impermanence and transitory character of external reality grew the nebulous brush strokes and luminescent colours now so familiar. Nothing was rigidly structured: even material form itself - as is a well-known fact to every child artist struggling through his or her first enforced Still Life - appears to become fluid with even the most subtle changes in light. A problem enthusiastically embraced by the Impressionists (but usually remaining at the level of niggling doubt in the young hopeful), they saw the smooth, staid conventions of Academic art as being intrinsically incapable of suitably expressing such delicate moods and patterns. For this reason, and recalling Impressionism's stress on the individual perception of an objective but transient reality, Pissarro's definition requires

two supplementary qualifiers: to encourage an individualist mode of artistic expression at the expense of formal artistic conventions and methods; and, although this was not uniformly held amongst the Impressionist ranks, to demonstrate a healthy contempt for the institutions within which such values were carried, expressed and transmitted.

Although Canvas and Careers states the Impressionists benefitted from what the authors call the 'dealer-critic system', the speculative advances offered by their main dealer, Paul Durand-Ruel, were at best uncertain. The financial problem of the group was ingraned in the French art system.

Beyond the famous private studios of such painters as David, Delacroix, Delaroche and Ingres, a career in art in France was rigidly controlled by the state. The extravagant growth in formal academic art education that swept European states in the late eighteenth century did not, in France, result in the appearance of private, autonomous and self-regulating institutions. This effectively ensured that the only sure path to commercial success - to the exposure of the Salons and its medals and honours - was through the studios of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts or its branches which were, as Pevsner states, 'incorporated by the central government and carried on as provincial schools.'(24) The critical significance of this centralisation of training and reward was certainly not lost on an aesthetically ignorant bourgeois public who identified 'good taste' with the doctrines and demonstrable standards of the formal institutions. It also,

of course, ensured that only those painters who were 'honoured', effectively by the state, were widely bought. With this artistic socialisation effectively sealed, the French bourgeoisie approached the apparently random strokes and colour formation of Impressionism.

Two of the most prominent members of the group experienced their critical rejection at the hands of the 1867 Salon selection juries as follows:

> Rejection of their work by the Salon of 1867 had a devestating effect on the financial prospects of Renoir and Monet, who needed sales in order to live. Monet's family lost confidence in his future and cut off his small allowance, so he no longer had anything to share with Renoir. (25)

By 1869 the group of painters of the new generation, the friends of Monet and Renoir, were regularly meeting at the Café Guerbois to enthusiastically thrash out their philosophy of art. What had once been an affinity founded upon the bonds of common friendship began gelling into an association formed around a more or less coherent set of artistic theories. The Guerbois groups became recognised by other artists as a distinct 'movement': and it was as a movement they decided to stage their own exhibition, in 1874, known, after much internal wrangling, as The Society of Artists, Painters, Sculptors and Etchers, and formed in direct opposition to the Salon system.

What is presented to the viewer by Impressionism is a depiction of the component parts of reality rather than a direct reflection of the external world. Drawing on a chance meeting of East and West, and in particular on the flat

conventions of Japanese art, the style denied the formal necessity of the 'realistic' illusion of perspective, an ingredient thought central to the doctrines of European academies, studios and Salons. As Berger states:

> For the Impressionists the visible no longer presented itself to man in order to be seen. On the contrary, the visible, in continual flux, became fugitive. (26)

The art public was certanly not fugitive: it attended in resplendent crowds. But only to laugh and pour scorn and ridicule on the assembled works. The artists, if they were artists, were considered insolent. The philistines, the perennial enemies of the Romantic, free artist, again submitted art to caricature and comic derision. The Impressionist style may have been, by way of comparison with Courbet, elegant and aristocratic (as indeed many of the painters initially were themselves), but the art public was of the weighty if ill-considered opinion that it was being taken for a ride. Pissarro could only lament in later years, 'what I suffered is beyond words.'

For whatever reason the middle-classes were shocked and appalled by the exhibition, they certainly refrained from purchasing the paintings on display. They could find no room in their tastefully decorated lounges and drawing rooms for such subversive images; nor could they tolerate the prospect of the works hanging in the official galleries and halls, built, after all, to reverently celebrate favoured classical styles. Nor could they stomach they stomach the

apparent irresponsibility of Impressionist artistic practice. If we recall from the previous the chapter the nineteenth century demand for responsible leisure and labour, we should not be shocked by the cultural irreverence perceived when the flourishes of Impressionism confronted the formal requirement that art muct be the result of painstaking and meticulous 'hard work'.

Despite Robert Hughes' assertion of the essential optimism underlying the Impressionists' capturing of the realities of nineteenth century French society which 'could become a vision of Eden...One might look at this world with irony, but never with the eye of despair'(27); and despite Monet's adherence to Boudin's dictum that 'one never arrives alone, unless with powerful personalities, and one doesn't invent an art all by one's self', Impressionism remained an art of isolation with its emphasis on the personal perception of reality - perhaps the first truly 'modernised' reformulation of the Romantic stresses seen earlier. Coupled with its critical failures, the Impressionist ethic drove its followers into true social isolation and often abject poverty.

The degree of entrenched hostility towards Impressionism is revealed by William Gaunt, who charts the fate of the painters further than I intend:

> Unchanged since Manet's day, the ire of the philistine and the academic reactionary found renewed vent when Gustave Caillebotte's magnificent bequest of sixty five paintings by Monet, Pissarro, Renoir, Sisley, Cezanne, Manet and Degas, was offered to the State after his death in 1893. Renoir, who was named

> as executor, was called by Le Temps, 'a veritable malefactor who had misled the youth of art'. If the Government were to accept such 'filth', pronounced the aged diehard of the Salons, Léon Gérôme, it would show a moral degeneration. (28)

Once isolated and ridiculed many of the painters ignored the public that had cast them aside and began to create art, in true Art for Art's Sake fashion, solely for themselves. Drawing the inevitable conclusion from the artist/philistine distinction, they produced only for artistic consumption.

The bohemianism of the Impressionists, then, was the direct product of the violent clash between the extreme assertion of the rights of the Romantic ideology of artistic autonomy and creative perception, and an art market which was rigidly attuned to a process of selection and reward geared to less innovative and more classical conventions. Not a rejection, excepting Pissarro, of bourgeois society as a whole, it emphatically was an explicit rejection on convention and tradition in favour of a celebration of continuous change and constant innovation. It had its effects on the tide of anti-academicism that continued to wash up further traces of the early Romantic spirit around the coasts of Europe. Mary Rogers illustrates this latter point:

> An example of their effect on students is the riot and strike staged....by pupils of Lehmann at the Beaux-Arts, because he would not permit them to utilise in their classwork what they had learned by visiting the group exhibitions; failing to force relaxation of the curriculum, they left his studio in a body and went to study with Renoir and other Impressionists. (29)

The Impressionist bohemian style is generally assumed to be the result of simply not having sufficient money; its adoption of Parisian café society as a shelter the result of having nowhere else to go. In this context we can certainly acknowledge the importance of the cafés to the movement, which, with their club-like intimacy and public openness provided suitable platforms from which ideas could be disseminated. But underlying the superficialities of the popular conception of the bohemian artist we find a movement confronting the 'problem situation' of an antagonistic market: antagonistic because of a conscious artistic choice to challenge, in the Romantic style, the dominant conventions of contemporary art.

> What does nature matter in itself? For the artist it is only an opportunity to express himself....Art is the strenuous attempt to express inner feelings in plastic form.
>
> Gustave Moreau, (Unpublished Notes)

> In silk and gold palace in Echtaban,
> Beautiful demons, youthful Satans,
> To the sound of Mohammedan music,
> Dedicate their five senses to the Seven Sins.
>
> Paul Verlaine, Poèmes Saturniens.

I will conclude this excursion into the world of noneteenth century French bohemian ideologies with a short appraisal of the bizarre case of 'fin de siècle' Paris. In many ways a tortured rebirth of Art for Art's Sake, it marks the extremes of consequence for the artist's life that the obsessional following of a specific, 'deviant' view of the meaning and

purpose of art can lead towards. Further, the often depraved 'gutter bohemia' of this period, so different in its garish absurdity from the 1830s generation or its equivalent in turn of the century London, dramatically illustrates the amorphous ideological character of bohemianism in its various reworkings of the Romantic themes.

Symbolism is painting and poetry attempted to permanently bury naturalism and realism: it resuscitated the Romantic critique of materialism and economic rationality, wrapping its art in an enveloping shroud of mysticism and unfettered imagination; it followed Schlegel, for its inspiration, back to the Middle Ages and left behind the contemporary concerns of Courbet and the Impressionists.

Symbolism could see that the logical end-point of Impressionism was the scientism of Seurat: in opposition, it turned inwards, away from the depiction of social reality, towards the less tangible qualities of the soul and the mind. In the broadest analytical sense, Symbolist art was still 'naturalist', in that it retained the external world as its base point of reference: but it emphasised the active restructuring of nature through the positive intervention of the artist's emotions, intellect and spiritual feelings.

Pessimistic about their own historical period (not in terms of its manifest 'good' or 'evil' character but, more satisfyingly, because of its mediocrity), the Symbolists followed Ruskin, the Pre-Raphaelites and Burne-Jones into an exploration of the splendid aesthetic isolation of the Middle

Ages. But in their search they embraced themes alien to the mild-mannered aesthetic concerns of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood I will describe in the next chapter: they revelled in the satanic and the occult; defiled and scorned contemporary culture in the name of the degenerate and artistic and social perversity. At best, they place themselves in a 'special relationship' with God. Mackintosh can point to the similarities between the Pre-Raphaelites and the disciples of the Salon de la Rose+Croix, one of the more eccentric and mystical of the many Symbolist cabals:

> ....both groups tended to look into myth and fairy tale for their subject matter as well as showing an interest in religious themes. Both groups tended to use their subject matter to express a state of mind rather than to describe an event. (30)

But it would be difficult to imagine any of the central figures of the Pre-Raphaelites, Rossetti's later 'moral decline' notwithstanding, adhering to the following statement from the Salon's leading guru, Sâr Peladan:

> The last enthusiasts of this world, we come among the tavern crowds braying the Marseillaise to intone a final hymn to the beauty which is God, and thus earn the right one day to gaze upon the mystic rose. My lust for the ideals of the past has violated the tombs in which the miracles lay sleeping, and my debauchery has had some knowledge of some very young ideas which will not develop for another century. (31)

Behind the absurd and pompous rhetoric of such utterances we can see the Symbolist aesthetic expressed; the final rejection of realism's imperatives pronounced; and the convinced statement that art should 'evoke the indefinable' in summoning ideas and

ınspiration from the artist's inner self.

More than any other aesthetic or vıew of art so far discussed, the extreme Romantic idealism of Symbolism demanded a correspondıng style of lıvıng. Throughout its coteries and cabals remains a distinct 'fit' between the expressed ideology of art and the artist's lıfe. The Symbolist's strove to discover styles of public dress and laguage that would give a readily dıscernıble public presence to the power of their spiritual, mystical and always unconventional experience. Some, such as the Rosicrucians (the followers of Peladan), wore the motifs of theır religious fervour brazenly; ın styles of dress whıch could have been lifted wholesale from early canvases by Mıllais or Rossetti or Holman Hunt.

Put another way, they conspicuously and consciously attempted to live in the manner of theır art: art and life could not be separated; both were esoteric publıc expressions of the ınner self, always limited ın appeal and tightly closed in meaning, which the conventions of academıc, tradıtıon and even the Romantically ınnpvatıve art of the nıneteenth century had for so long rendered strıctly out of bounds. For a whıle, and for a select few, the controlled and demandıng profession of Fine Artist was suspended: as Mackıntosh states about Gaugin, who, 'after he had come to the point of vıew that his art should be about hıs life, realised that thıs inexorably meant that his lıfe had to be about hıs art.'(32)

What is implicit and subdued ın earlier bohemianism becomes open and declared as Symbolism attacks the formal

definitions of art. It was this singleminded determination to unite art and life that drove such painters as Van Gogh and Gaugin (everyone's idea of the 'romantic' artists) to 'not only break with bourgeois society, but with the whole of European civilisation.' The whole of formality and tradition, the totality of the paradigmatic conventions of perspective, colour and line, were in the process of being overturned. For the artists themselves, the Romantic tradition of bohemianism ends the century in the gutter and the asylum. The apotheosis of the dreams of the early French bohemians is the fin de siècle abyss, the inexorable desire to destroy everything civilised in themselves in their dedicated push towards self-destruction. Schiller's dream of the artist on the pinnacle of humanity disappears in the extreme of indulgent individualism.

For such reasons alone, their art was doomed to instant commercial and critical failure. The following, from Gerald Reitlinger's The Economics of Taste, illustrates the riches the new art failed to attract:

> In 1896 Gaugin wrote from Tahiti to his friend, Georges Daniel de Manfried, proposing to send him 15 completed pictures a year in return for an annual remittance of £96. One of these pictures, offered at £6 10s each, was sold 63 years later for £130,000. (33)

Until bourgeois sensibilities became accustomed to the limitations of the threats implicit in such defiling anti-culture, until such art was romanticised, and until 'discovered' or 'authorised' by the critical establishment, the art public rejected without fear or favour.

The symbolists found some consolation in the support of

their rqually unconventional compatriots in the literary fraternity. But relatively few - with the notable inclusion in this group of Moreau, who was made Professor at the Beaux-Arts in 1892 after years of obscurity and rejection - reversed the downward path on which they had embraked: even if their art (if not their lifestyle) was not as unacceptable to the Salons as they liked to believe.(34)

The importance of literary Symbolism in France highlights one of the many difference between Parisian 'Decadence' and London's 'Aestheticism'. By the 1890s the symbols and institutions of Parisian bohemian art had become more than mere motifs of bourgeois fashion to be illictly explored: bohemia's 'romance' had become sentimentalised and converted into a more general slice of Western cultural myth than any of the preceding models. Richard Miller states, 'youth came from everywhere to play poor artist among the real artists and the real poor.' They vame to play voyeur to such as the poet Paul Verlaine, the deranged and pathetic one-time friend of Rimbaud who would, if coaxed with sufficient absinthe, 'perform' for the benefit of the assembled café crowds. 'Sitting over an absinthe,' writes Steve Bradshaw, 'in his dirty cape like any tramp or drunkard he symbolised the fate of the artist in a hostile society.'(35) True: but Verlaine took drunken, tottering steps towards personal degradation beyond the imagination of many contemporay painters, and certainly beyond the more delicate artistic perceptions and pretensions of previous bohemian ideologues. What distinguished Verlaine

from his contemporaries in England, moreover, was his standing as a Parisian institution, almost as symbolically modern and culturally relevant as the Eiffel Tower. If the English poets of the time were poor and obscure, French poets were poor but famous.

Yet if Verlaine took the doctrines of Rimbaud too much to heart for his own good, he does symbolise the prevailing passions of fin de siècle Decadence; and again marks a distinction between the French character and the English Aesthete of the next chapter. Although there's the shared bond of a deep hatred of the philistine which, to varying degrees of commitment, has pervaded the history of the Romantic artist, they are perhaps distinguished by the level of passion and disdain exhibited. Verlaine, in his more sober moments, would have agreed with the classic Symbolist dictum of Mallarmé, the follower of Baudelaire, who declared: 'Let the masses read works on morality, but for heaven's sake do not give them our poetry to spoil.' English Aestheticism, on the other hand, once freed of the moralising of Ruskin and Morris and their demands for a social purpose for art, renounced bourgeois taste and ethics in the name of an equally elitist, anti-social vision of art - but one tied to the life of the dilettante. French Decadence renounced taste and morality, together with the whole bourgeois conception of 'progress' and responsibility in the name of an art more fundamentally and intensely tied to Life. Phillippe Jullian may over-generalise when he comments on the importance of the Pre-Raphaelite style to France's

Decadent phase, but he is problably in essence correct:

> Those fashions were adopted by men who were looking, above all else, for a soul, while the English Decadence was chiefly a revolt in matters of taste, and ridicule was the chief danger that it braved. (36)

Perhaps Wilde would disagree: he came to experience the French predilection for death and abjection - in the process coining the catchphrase which summarises the Symbolist aesthetics: 'Nature imitates Art'.

The historical process in England which leads to Wilde's pronouncement is not as colourful as its French equivalent. But the twin artistic 'problem situations' of the market and the political, social responsibility of art and the artist which guided my tour through French nineteenth century bohemia emerge just as distinctly across the channel. They are accompanied and dramatically reinforced by the third problem: the relationship of the modern, professional Fine Artist to his fellows. A strand of the institutional history of the bohemian ideology implicit in my discussion of the French art world but now revealed more fully with the history of formal art education.

Notes and References: Chapter Five.

1. Butler, 1981, p.16
2. Russell, 1961, p.657
3. Thompson, 1977, p.893
4. Miller, 1977, p.39
5. Gautier, 1915, p.68
6. Hyslop, 1980. p.15
7. Hauser, 1962, vol.4, pp.18/19
8. ibid. p.179
9. Hauser, 1962, vol.3, p.9
10. Hauser, 1962, vol.4, p.19
11. Miller, op.cit., p.58
12. Miller, op.cit., p.61
13. cited in Nochlin, 1971, p.51
14. cited in Goldwater and Treves, eds., 1976, p.296
15. Berger, New Society, 19 January 1978
16. Nochlin, op.cit., p.50
17. Courbet's talent, too large to be suppressed for long, was eventually recognised through the bestowal of traditional honours. Such is the prive of infamy.
18. Hauser, 1962, vol.4, p.62
19. White and White, 1965, p.160
20. Fischer, 1963, p.73
21. Clark, Screen, vol.21, no.1
22. cited in Kramer, 1974, p.37
23. Hughes, 1980, p.113
24. Pevsner, 1973, p.142

25. Rogers, 1970, p.201

26. Berger, 1972, p.18

27. Hughes, op.cit., p.113

28. Gaunt, 1970, p.54

29. Rogers, op.cit., p.220

30. Mackintosh, 1975, p.45

31. cited in Jullian, 1974, p.260

32. Mackintosh, op.cit., p.11

33. Reitlinger, 1961, p.324

34. See, for example, Lucie-Smith, 1972, :

> Since Symbolists attached more importance to philosophical attitudes than to techniques of expression, Symbolist art was often able to maintain its links with the retrograde world of the official salons and academies, which still controlled the way in which honours and official patronage were distributed.

35. Bradshaw, 1978, p.75

36. Jullian, op.cit., p.26

CHAPTER SIX

....the Aim of Art is to increase the happiness of men, by giving them beauty and interest of incident to amuse their leisure, and prevent them wearying even of rest, and by giving them hope and bodily pleasure in their work; or, shortly, to make man's work happy and his rest fruitful. Consequently, genuine art is an unmixed blessing of the race of man.

William Morris.

My dear fellow, you must never say this painting is good or that bad. Good and bad are not terms to be used by you. But you may say 'I like this' or 'I don't like that', and you will be within your rights.

Whistler to Oscar Wilde.

The Academy! Whom the Gods wish to make ridiculous they made Academicians.

Whistler.

The modern artist, we've seen, had considerable difficulty reconciling the demands of the capitalist art market with the opposing pull of Romantic ideology. He also confronted a social and political world which, ambiguous and eclectic in its attitudes towards art and the artist, was generally deeply suspicious of aesthetic innovation that appeared to breach the boundaries of cultural conformity. In this chapter I will explore more deeply the third 'problem situation' facing the modern artistic experience: the attempt to work out the opposition between the Romantic concept of the artist as an

absolute individualist, dependent on the subjective powers of personal creativity, and the increasingly social nature of the artist's practice; in other words the tension between an individualist, private mode of creative autonomy and a system of social relations of artistic production which, beyond the demands of the market, attempts to shape and objectively define the nature of artistic work. The shift, in terms of my analysis, is away from a generalised sense of ideological opposition to the specific historical problems of an institutional context. The problem shows the cultural questioning, the bohemian solutions that occur when the Romantic critique clashes with stages in the advancement of the necessarily collective, usually disciplined character of formal art training: the progressive redefinition of educational institutions which initially furthered the interest of a classical Fine Art aesthetic but came increasingly to become instruments whose main purpose was perceived as the efficient training of designers - or just artists who could perform some useful purpose beyond that traditionally associated with art. Those English artists who have consciously worked within the Romantic tradition have generally directed their appropriation of the cry of artistic autonomy and authenticity against either the institutions supporting certain Fine Art ideals, or, with steadily increasing regularity, against those attempting to propagate a rigidly materialist, socially useful aesthetic.

The particular importance of the history of art education

is that its institutional framework has carried both the bohemian and the orthodox, the 'useful' and the defiantly 'useless' ideologies of art through its own process of development. It is also central to my overall argument that a significant element of the reality of the late 1960s counter-culture occurred as a direct result of the clash between these opposing ideological formations.

> When there were no academies great artists lived and were encouraged by the powers of their time to use their genius on great works, whereas academies have caused Art to deteriorate until it has become content with working at head-and-tail pieces in books.
>
> Carstens.

The institutional origins of the academic system, and the philosophical inspirations underlying them, clearly pre-date by many centuries my concern with the conflicting ideologies and cultural struggles of modern art. Equally apparent, I feel, is the fact that 'the Academy', as a descriptive term, embraces the whole institutional framework of education, research and philosophy and is not in any sense specific to artistic training. Lastly, while on the subject of truisms, another fact is the neglect by commentators of the particular historical development of Fine Art's own academic system: rarely, outside of the general world of art itself, and then only perfunctorily, has the significance of this development been charted and assessed. As I've argued earlier, the art

historians confront the few serious sociologists of art, and the practising artists contentedly occupy the centre ground often oblivious to both. Pevsner, however, is one of the few historians to attempt to bridge the divide in his academic chronicles. He certainly traces the rapid rise in numbers and importance of academic art establishments throughout Europe during the eighteenth century:

> ....there existed in 1720 nineteen in the whole of Europe, of which, only three or four can be regarded as academies proper. In Paris and Rome, and also in Florence and Bologna, academies fulfilled or endeavoured to fulfill tasks very much like those of present day academies of art. (1)

From this date the academies grew and spread to the extent that, by the early nineteenth century, the process of integrated 'academisation' of all art instruction in Europe was well on the way to completion. It had proceeded throughout the eighteenth century withou restriction and without discernible opposition.

If this development, in line with the dissolution of the craft guilds and trade-companies, signalled art's final break with its profane history, it also marked, on a cross-European scale, the rise of state strategies for modernising art's commercial practice in the interests of industrial manufacture and trade. As Pevsner carries on:

> Only some of the oldest foundations with particularly strong traditions, such as Florence and Rome and a negligibly small number of new institutions, such as London, Madrid, Turin, and Dusseldorf, were able to keep aloof from this new tendency....(2)

The position of London's Royal Academy in this 'negligibly small number of new institutions' is central.

Apart from the limited drawing competitions for children organised and sponsored by what was initially the Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce in Great Britain, later retitled The Royal Society of Arts, the Royal Academy Schools of Design remained effectively the only form of organised art tuition in England for more than 70 years.

The Instrument of Foundation of the Royal Academy was duly signed by that respected patron of the arts, George III, in 1768 - although Pevsner comments, 'its origins are only loosely connected with royal and not connected at all with governmental initiative.'(3) Pressured into existence by demands from within art itself, its objectives were immediately clear: to promote an annual exhibition open to artists considered of 'distinguished merit'; and the establishment of the Schools of Design - misleading, as only one has actually ever existed - for the tuition of the principles and practice of art to aspiring young hopefuls.

The Academy as a whole was to be self-financing, and thus largely independent from both public scrutiny and state control: not only was there to be no trade-orientation, as existed in many of its European counterparts, there was a fierce jealousy of its formal autonomy. Whereas, as I noted in the last chapter, all French schools of art were incorporated by the central government and run as provincial schools, the lone English experiment of the 18th. century ensured its

financial freedom from state interference by organising itself, around the profitable annual exhibition, as a private enterprise concern.

As a teaching institution its sense of purpose was equally assured, initially under the benign influence of its first President, the celebrated artist Joshua Reynolds. Reynolds, whose theoretical guide to the philosophy and practice of teaching art read simply 'a mere copier of nature can never produce anything great', headed the select band of forty members or Academicians, the body from which the tutors in Design were drawn. The brief of the Professor of Painting, enshrined in the Instrument of Foundation, gave a solid legitimacy to Reynolds' limited perspective:

> There shall be a Professor of Painting, who shall read annually six Lectures, calculated to instruct the Students in the principles of composition, to form their taste of design and colouring, to strengthen their judgement, to point out to them the beauties and imperfections of celebrated works of Art, and the particular excellencies or defects of great masters, and, finally, to lead them into the readiest and most efficacious paths of study; his salary shall be thirty pounds a year; and he shall continue in office during the Kings's pleasure. (4)

Not only, then, were the elite officers of the Academy freed from conc ern about most worldly affairs, and gratefully institutionalised in a fairly secure form of tenure, they enjoyed, in supplement, a rigid perspective, an aesthetic paradigm of what officially constituted 'celebrated works of Art' to guide their teaching practices. The ideology of 'beauties and perfections' had been concretely set in a formal institutional

structure and elevated to heights beyond the eclectic gaze of mere mortals. If, as we've seen, the actual concept of 'professional Fine artist' was a new innovation, the canons of judgement by which future artists were to be trained came uncompromisingly from the past. As Peter Fuller states:

> ....fine artists came more and more to see themselves as the consummation of an unbroken continuum of 'Art' stretching back from the Royal Academy to prehistoric caves. (5)

Under the despotic guidance of Reynolds, the Schools of Design studiously ignored the realities of trade and art's possible commercial responsibilities, and gloried in the status of finishing schools of High Culture; a comfortable haven where young middle-class men could while away happy and industrious hours copying antique relice and stylising Life and Nature in the pursuance of a future Associateship. From this privileged genesis, Academic Art in England could never seriously consider technical and stylistic experimentation. It preferred a heavy dependence on an aesthetic sense that was both static and transhistorical.

The dominant ideology was beautiful in its simplicity. The 'work' of art had already been carried out and mastered - all that remained for the academic artist of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was to work meticulously according to the exalted standards embodied in the acknowledged masterpieces. Art's formal stylistic development was complete and immutable. And what this effectively ensured was the practical proof of Reynolds' admonition: art's reference point, its basic

subject was not and never could be the external world of Nature; it must always be the History of Culture. The 'truth' of art's historical lineage was held to self-evident in its cultural authenticity; its pictorial conventions unquestionable in their historical statement. And significantly, when the choice was made over the paintings to form the central body and artistic theme of the new national collection to be housed in Trafalgar Square, the Report of the Select Committee on Arts and Manufactures (1836) concluded 'Paintings of the Raphael era form the best nucleus of a gallery.'

This, then, was the unequivocal dominant ethos in the construction of British art, theory and practice, until the critics from within the country's manufacturing base provoked the less than spectacular changes of the 1830s.

The English system of art training was, though, by the 1830s, already under fire from artists. The same Report that eulogised Raphael's importance to Western culture also carried within its bureaucratic oages a series of attacks on the hallowed Royal Academy: its evidence reveals heavy criticism brought to bear upon the institution's classical portals by artists more concerned with their own future than with the assumed divinity of the past great masters.

Joseph Hume, leader of the Radicals in Parliament, had loudly protested against the Academy throughout the 1830s, even petitioning Queen Victoria to withdraw the Royal Charter from a 'useless' institution. House of Commons requests to the Academy to account for its secluded activities had already

been diplomatically rebuffed by the then President, Sir Martin Arthur Shee. Fuseli, a full member of the Academy from 1790 had earlier stated:

> All schools of painters, whether public or private, supported by patronage or individual contribution were, and are, symptoms of art in distress, movements of public dereliction and decay of taste. (6)

But his was an isolated, private critique. Not until the 1830s were the activities, and even the founding principles of the Academy called into public question.

The artist John Martin, asked by the Committee's Chairman, William Ewart, about the fairness of selection at the Annual Exhibition for 'outside' painters, replied:

> I think I have been more unfortunate than many; but in general the royal academicians have so many places for themselves (the number is eight for each academician, and I believe the associates also the same number) that sufficient space is not left to give any other artist a fair chance. (7)

Another critic was the contemporary artist and polemicist, Haydon. Haydon, the artist who was to do so much to popularise the Classical style in the early nineteenth century, and the man who had said of Fuseli that the 'engines' of his mind were 'blasphemy, lechery and blood', pursued Martin's attack, arguing that the Academy's unjust rules and biased methods of selection actively prevented non-Academicians from selling their work by denying the right to exhibit 'on which their existence depends.' But, ironically, in the wider range of his criticism he also echoed Fuseli by throwing the Romantic gauntlet in the face of dignity and professional esteem. When

asked by Ewart whether the Arts had gained or suffered following the foundation of academic institutions, Haydon succinctly observed:

> The academies all over Europe...have generated an artificial style of art, which has been called academic, distinct from what is natural. (8)

The above attacks, for all their injured personal pride and aggrieved moral outrage, and for all their apparent airing of the central themes of the anti-convention Romantic spirit, pale against what had already occurred in Europe in the philosophy of Schlegel and what was to come later with the Pre-Raphaelite revolt and much later with the events of 1968.

An artist who would doubtless have warmed to the attacks on the Royal Academy, and who could have matched the rhetorical force of such as Schiller and Schopenhauer had he lived to see the formation of the Select Committee, is William Blake.

The mysterious and mystical Blake, a close friend of Fuseli, was the classic Romantic personality in his thoughts that the 'greatest enemies of his time were reasoning, the philosophy of Locke and the science of Newton'. He detested not only the Academy, and Reynolds in particular, but the art it represented. So much so, he pushed his break with many of the enshrined traditional conventions of oil painting to the point of personal isolation and long-term obscurity: if Blake prefigured the emergence of the English bohemian artistic ideology, as in many ways he did, his own existence of intractable and remore individualism parallels more the intensity of an early Van Gogh or Verlaine. As John Berger

states, Blake pushed the unconventional to revolutionary limits:

> ....although he still relied upon the traditional conventions of drawing, he did everything he could to make his figures lose substance, to become transparent and indeterminate from one another, to defy gravity, to be present but intangible, to glow without a definable surface, not to be reducible to objects. (9)

There is no doubt the Academicians poured scorn on artists such as Blake; if, indeed, they ever discovered them. For them Blake could only have been an exponent of 'low art', certainly not fit to be ordained in the church of High Culture.

This patronising attitude reflects more than the institutional dislike of the individual,artist fighting a public body; and it is certainly more than an inbred elitism. In artistic terms, what was occurring was a battle of styles and philosophies: between the Academicians reliance on an aesthetic drawn, if not from the prehistoric caves, then certainly from classical Rome and Athens, and those suspicious of this heritage. It was not a disagreement over the essential sanctity of the artistic spirit, for both groups believed that art carried a message in some way superior to state and society: it was essentially a dispute about the form of this message. Haydon, entranced by the 'importation' of the Elgin Marbles, wrestled with the spirit of Blake, anticipating the debates centred around the Pre-Raphaelites; in France, Delacroix's violent emotional pageants fought the serene and passionless classicism of David and Ingres; and in Germany the Nazarenes opposed the aesthetic of Winckelmann, who

believed 'the sole means for us to become - ay, if possible, inimitably great - is the imitation of the ancients.'

In the history of the philosophy of art education, the Nazarenes, if obscure, are important for the ideas they raise. They promoted the idea of a communal, medieval atmosphere in art and in art schools, but were resolutely not prepared to return art to the subservience of the Middle Ages: alongside the notion, implicit in both Schiller and Schlegel, of a 'community of artists' exists the emphasis on personality and unthwarted will. So in this sense there was no philosophical disagreement between the Classical Academicians and the Romantic Nazarenes. The Academicians could not agree with the Nazarene belief that 'the truest use of art is that which leads it heavenwards'; nor could they countenance the adulterated mysticism captured in the ascetic medievalism. But they firmly agreed that the truth of art's purpose could only be rescued from the veiled threats of a subservient role by strengthening the modern position of Fine Artist. In this sense, distinctions blur as the first reconciliation of dissent within 'free art', and within Fine Art's formal institutional structure was achieved before the protagonists had properly squared up. As Pevsner states,

> The academician was now wholly convinced that Schiller and the Romantic School had done right in establishing the sacredness of art. (10)

The 'Goths versus the Romans' was how the early nineteenth century painters reasonably accurately described the battle of

styles. In England the debate was not to dramatically surface, certainly not to gain large public recognition, until Rossetti, Millais and Holman Hunt, guided by the art theory and criticism of Ruskin, rekindled the Gothic flame of the Middle Ages. Throughout the first half of the nineteenth century the 'rediscovery' of the beauty that was Rome and Athens, fuelled by the marbles from the Parthenon, proved unassailable: if for not other reason than its precise simplicity of line and colour proved the perfect aesthetic accompaniament for the methodical, resolute and serious Victorian character. What this aesthetic meant in terms of the Victorian passion for collecting and commemorating artefacts was the paintings of the school of Raphael and the mannered delicacy of post-Raphael art.

> Raphael was the one painter who had proved immune to changes of fashion, to depressed markets, the one painter, whose prices - for his fully developed works at any rate - had always gone up. (11)

As I noted earlier, the National Gallery hoped to creates its collection around the works of Raphael: but founded in 1824, it was a further 15 years until the first masterpiece was hung, at a cost of £6,000. The influence of the Nazarenes in Germany may have provoked a mania there for the works of such artists as Fra Angelico and the Primitives, but the English academic spirit, which governed museum selection, remained untainted by ideals of artistic community and the mystical purpose of art and preferred more recent paintings. The aesthetic ideal, and, importantly, the principles by which art

was taught, may have materialised from ancient Rome and Athens, but:

> With the exception of two wings of a Lorenzo Monaco altarpiece, which came as a gift in 1849, the National Gallery acquired nothing older than the year 1500 until 1853. (12)

By 1853 the Pre-Raphaelite revolt was an established artistic fact; owing inspirational debts to the Nazarenes and Blake, but also increasingly guided by the substantial figure of Ruskin.

John Ruskin's contribution to establishing the respectability of art criticism and theory was enormous. If, even by the standards of today's critical commentaries, it was often obscure and esoteric, it could also be lyrical and illuminating, as the following extract from his numerous polemics against mid-Victorian art demonstrates:

> ....we may pass furlongs of exhibition wall without receiving any idea or sentiment, other than that home-made ginger is hot in the mouth, and that it is pleasant to be out on the lawn in fine weather. (13)

Modern art was shallow: it contained neither intellectual integrity nor philosophical substance. The reasons for Ruskin's dislike of such artists as Reynolds are complex, but can be grasped perhaps by locating his comments within the context of his continuing critical forays into the heart of the Royal Academy. The following passage from his immensely influential multi-volume work Modern Painters captures the essence of his at the time controversial view of the possibilities and limitations of the teaching of art:

> Therefore it is, that every system of teaching is false which holds forth 'great art' as in any wise to be taught for students, or even to be aimed at by them. Great art is precisely that which never was, nor will be taught, it is pre-eminently and finally the expression of the spirits of great men; so that the only wholesome teaching is that which simply endeavours to fix thox characters of nobleness in the pupils' mind, of which it seems easily susceptible; and without holding out to him, as a possible or even probable result, that he should ever paint like Titian, or carve like Michael Angelo, enforces upon him the manifest possibility, and assured duty, of endeavouring to draw in a manner at least honest and intelligible; and cultivates in him those general charities of heart, sincerities of thought, and graces of habit which are likely to lead him, throughout life, to prefer openness to affectation, realities to shadows, and beauty to corruption. (14)

This wonderful quotation from Ruskin, worth the extended presentation if for no other reason than to capture the intense moralism and confident self-righteousness of his writing, illustrates his own aesthetic perceptions so at variance with the orthodoxies of the Academy. Although certainly not against academic art training in principle, Ruskin could not tolerate the embodiment within the limited English academic system of certain classical styles, guiding, as if by holy writ, the transmission of what he saw as unobtainable ideals of teaching. For Ruskin's theory of art, to which his own accomplished illustrations testify, preaches the <u>absence</u> of style: like Courbet, Ruskin is concerned only with truth to the material world of nature; truth to the artist's experience of nature; truth to the exact, detailed recording of natural appearance. He treated the accepted drawing manuals with contempt, and rejected totally the post-Renaissance ideals kept alive by

the formal training and rigidly selected exhibitions of the Royal Academy - effectively, until the publication of Modern Painters, the only source of coherent art theory in England.

Ruskin looked back to the past, but his reasons were aesthetic, romantic and social rather than as seeing the art of the past as embodying sets of unalterable and rigidly 'true' conventions. If Ruskin, like the Nazarenes, was besotted with an idealised vision of the Middle Ages, he was drawn there for reasons far removed from those which attracted the art establishment of the time.

His obsession grew partly from a profound dislike of the unsure aesthetic pleasures of industrialism and mid-Victorian culture. He sought intellectual, spiritual and inspirational refuge in the Middle Ages, and more particularly in the purity of line and colour found in the early Italian masters. His vision of beauty was medieval rather than nineteenth century.

Yet although such aesthetic romanticism seems far removed from, for example, the art of Courbet, and although such theories and the art they were to publicly defend and justify were subsequently heavily criticised for their apparent blind escapism, Ruskin's pressing demand for art to tell only the truth was as equally deeply committed to the realistic depiction of society. The primary difference lies in Ruskin's commitment to an idealistic, even supernatural order rather than an open attachment to the more prosaic laws of either strict positivism or hard-headed socialism.

Ruskin, however, was also attracted to the Middle Ages by that element of the Romantic spirit which fascinated Schlegel and captured the catholic hearts of the Nazarenes. For Ruskin agreed with Marx that man realised himself through labour: what took the critic out of the nineteenth century was his demand that labour must always be creative; that it should be intellectual rather than mindlessly physical; a definition which sees a fusing of intellectual and manual labour in pre-industrial periods before creativity and unity of purpose yielded to the machine age. As a definition of art's 'higher purpose', Ruskin's thesis was to directly inspire the Holy War against capitalism and industrialism attempted by Morris and Burne-Jones.

Arnold Hauser offers a reproving account of the rise of this English Romantic idealism. Reacting against the dominance of utilitarianism and free-market capitalism,

> The protest of the idealists against the reduction of man to 'homo economicus' was the eternal protestation of the romantic 'philosophy of life' - of the belief in the logical inexhaustibility of life and the impossibility of subduing it to man's design - against rationalism and thought abstracted from immediate reality. The reaction against utilitarianism was a second romanticism, in which the fight against social injustice and the opposition to the actual theories of the 'dismal science' played a much smaller part than the urge to escape from the present....(15)

Hauser's Marxist-oriented cynicism is understandable, even if it regrettably reinforces the general absence of critical awareness of the deeper cultural significance of artistic

ideologies. But his comments certainly cannot lessen the considerable historical presence of Ruskin's theories: one area where this power was most picturesquely felt and focussed was in his uneven and often unpleasant relationship with the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood (PRB). By 1856 Ruskin could confidently state:

> The perfect unison of expression as the painter's main purpose, with the full and natural exertion of his pictorial power in the details of the work, is found only in the old Pre-Raphaelite periods, and in the modern Pre-Raphaelite school...Hunt's Light of the World is, I believe, the most perfect instance of expressional purpose with technical power, which the world has yet produced. (16)

Rossetti, who Ruskin believed 'was the first who set the example of a living dramatic truth in conception of events in sacred history', was accepted as a probationary student at the Royal Academy Schools in 1845. Around the same time he 'discovered' Blake's manuscripts in the British Museum. He also met William Holman Hunt, a young painter already acquainted with Ruskin's Modern Painters, and the richly talented Millais. The three were to form the creative core of the PRB.

In their time at the Academy they rapidly dsicovered its inherent dogmatism and inbred traditionalism: they saw that, as G.H.Fleming notes, 'the official leaders of English art accalimed Raphael to be the king of painters and idol of art students.'(17)

Rossetti himself was to reject the Academy and its training at an early stage, although his reasons were more ones of boredom and rebellion against the rigid academic regime of

the Schools rather ones centred upon formed artistic idealism. But Rossetti's waywardness apart, the three Brothers were agreed on the harmful effects of the legacy of Reynolds' teaching, and it was this suspicion of the art establishment's time-honoured credentials, together of course with their youthful friendship, that initially bound them together.

The PRB's artistic ideology, although never totally distinct, was in many ways similar to that preached aloud from the high church of Ruskin. They shared his dislike of transcendental conventions; they shared his idealistic moralism, and thought that art must always be more than the mere production of stylised pictures; they thought that art should be both realistic and concerned fundamentally with human emotions. Caught up in the new public discussion of art (the emergence of which owed much to the stirring influence of Ruskin during the 1840s), their first publicly exhibited paintings achieved the critical acclaim of a round of ham sandwiches at an orthodox Jewish wedding. Timothy Hilton attempts to establish the reasons why the PRB inspired the wrath of the Academy and the critics:

> They objected to two Pre-Raphaelite principles. The first of these was the evenness of working over the whole surface of the canvas.....The second was the evenness of light, and the refusal to proceed from dark edges towards a light centre.(18)

Ruskin himself, reflecting in 1878 upon the initial shock such pictures as Rossetti's Annunciation caused, offers similar sentiments:

> ....consider...the shock to the feelings of

> all these delicately minded persons, on being asked to conceive a Virgin waking from her sleep on a pallet bed, in a plain room, startled by sudden words and ghostly presence which she does not comprehend, and casting in her mind what manner of salutation this should be. (19)

But these accounts, although accurately depicting the horror shown at the daring stylistic rebellion of the PRB, are probably less than the whole cause. For the art establishment was also sanctimoniously appalled at the blatant impudence of young painters - and in 1851 Rossetti was still only 22 years old - who presumed to reject the mannered principles and art of the Rennaissance and call themselves Pre-Raphaelites.

The establishment's reaction was summed up by The Times' infamous and wholesale condemnation of the paintings on display at the Academy's exhibition of 1851. It now seems curious in the Age of Athena that the paintings were dismissed for their 'aversion to beauty'; particularly, as Hauser argues, the movement was 'an extreme cult of beauty'. But it does help in understanding the level to which Rennaissance taste was entrenched in the minds and institutions of the art establishment. Ruskin rallied to the defence of the PRB, the practitioners of his theoretical aesthetic, and the fortunes of the movement began to gradually improve.

But the process of accomodation and reconciliation was far from smooth - despite Millais' election to the Royal Academy, as Associate, in 1853. For by this time the anti-conventionalism of the PRB had stirred many other young painters into a children's crusade against the restrictions of academic

art. The PRB had 'become the symbol of modernity', and certainly the leading inspiration to the new generation of painters. Rossetti himself noted in 1855:

> It was only the other day that the assertion of such futile fallacies as I have alluded to concerning Pre-Raphaelitism entailed a volley of hisses upon Mr Hart, the recently elected Professor of Painting at the Royal Academy, when he delivered his first lecture: an expression of opinion unprecedented, I am given to understand, in the institution. (20)

If the Academy could not control the adoption of PRB principles by its students, and if, by this time, few exhibitions of contemporary art failed to reveal the effects of the Brotherhood's influence, they could respond in one certain manner: by refusing to hang their pictures. In 1855 there was only one painting shown by a leading Pre-Raphaelite at the annual Exhibition.

But by this time the original Brotherhood was revealing definite signs of dissolution:

> Millais had no more time for the Brotherhood; he was busy with his career, and with Effie Ruskin. Rossetti was busy with Lizzy Siddal. And Hunt was packing his bags and brushes, preparing to leave England. (21)

Millais, arguably the finest draughtsman England had ever produced, had willingly joined the Establishment and sold out his early idealism to profit; Hunt, the painter who was to remain most faithful to the original PRB ideals, was off to seek inspiration in the Holy Land; only Rossetti remained. And Rossetti, who for so long had shied away from exposure to further public reaction by refusing to exhibit his pictures, joined forces with Ruskin to teach their common philosophy

of art at the recently founded Working Men's College at 31 Red Lion Square, London.

It had long been Ruskin's ambition to spread the word to a wider, less artistically aristocratic audience. Although fiercely antagonistic towards the Royal Academy, the critic favoured a less privileged dissemination of the morality and higher purpose of art, as his opinions on the structure of art examinations demonstrate:

> ....I think the art examination should have three objects:
> 1. To put the happiness and knowledge which the study of art conveys within the conception of the youth, so that he may in after-life pursue them, if he has the gift.
> 2. To enforce, as far as possible, such knowledge of art among those who are likely to become its patrons, or the guardians of its works, as may enable them usefully to fulfil those duties.
> 3. To distinguish pre-eminent gift for the production of works of art, so as to get hold of all the good artistical faculty born in the country, and leave no Giotto lost among hill-shepherds. (22)

As Hilton states, 'this ambition, and the social interests inspiring it, were expressed in the Pre-Raphaelite educational experiment at the Working Men's College in London.'(23)

Established by F.D.Maurice, a Christian Socialist whose principles dominated the college and whose relationship with the ever truculent Ruskin is variously recounted(24), the college's experiments in art education are one of the more interesting developments of the Pre-Raphaelite aesthetic revolt.

The students Ruskin desired to convert into budding Pre-Raphaelites were those for whom the Government Schools of Design were initially established. There were goldsmiths,

engravers, furniture-makers and draughtsmen; already skilled in their respective crafts, they came for exposure to the 'higher ideals' taught by Ruskin. And in his teaching, around the principles established in his Elements of Drawing, the sage certainly remained true to his anti-academicism. His drawing classes at the college opposed the practices of the Academy's official manuals which, he argued,

> ....propose to give the student a power of dexterous sketching with pencil or water colour, so as to emulate (at a considerable distance) the slighter work of our second-rate artists; or they propose to give him such accurate command of mathematical forms as may afterwards enable him to design rapidly and cheaply for manufactures. (25)

But despite the last blustering admonition, Ruskin was not against the the alliance of art with industrial manufacturing - as we shall soon see, he was a significant inspiration, and ally to Morris. But he was vociferously against the immoral 'cheapening' of art this link so often seemed to necessarily betray. What turns Ruskin from just aesthetic revolutionary into at least a relevant social critic, albeit in line with the spirit of Romanticism, is such as:

> Wherever you see want, or misery, or degradation in this world about you, there, be sure, either industry has been wanting, or industry has been in error. It is not accident, it is not Heaven-commanded calamity, it is not the original and inevitable evil of man's nature, which fills your streets with lamentation, and your graves with prey. It is only that, when there should have been providence, there has been waste; when there should have been labour, there has been lasciviousness and wilfulness....(26)

The balance could be redressed partly by wealth being used

intelligently, and according to Ruskin's own aesthetic teachings, and partly, and equally importantly, by recreating a division of labour which is not subservient to the machine, but, in the true spirit of Schlegel and the Nazarenes, fuses into a unity of purpose and creative expression. In terms of the practical philosophy of art, we're back to the unconventional nature of Ruskin's form of realism: workers and craftsmen, and presumably industrialists, must be taught to 'see' Nature truthfully and free from the distortions of either false style or immoral and degrading purpose.- Only art which accurately portrays the 'truth' of Nature can, by this token, be either great or worthwhile. He taught this redefinition of art and labour as a visionary preaches: as though the veils of deceit and obfuscation could be suddenly stripped from Nature and 'cheapening' social relations, and, in the manner of Holman Hunt's thematic painting, the light of the world revealed to man.

Rossetti joined the proselytising mission as a teacher, but could not match either Ruskin's passion or his dedication. He was replaced, in 1858, by Ford Madox Brown, the painter who had once taught him on his departure from the Royal Academy Schools. The young painter's departure was symptomatic of something deeper than a lack of committment to the simple art of teaching. As Hilton comments:

> The contrast between the teaching of Ruskin and Rossetti dramatises the growing split between two opposed trends in Pre-Raphaelitism, as indeed in nineteenth century art as a whole. The 'hard edge' style of Holman Hunt and the early Millais is followed by the 'soft edge' painting of Rossetti and Burne-Jones. Against the real is posed the

> ideal; against examination, intuition. A firmly limited delight in the facts of nature is replaced by an spiration to represent the insubstantial, the ethereal. Naturalism gives way to symbolism. In all these equations, Rossetti represents the latter impulse, Ruskin the former. Ruskin, Rossetti and Brown, in their attitudes to the business of teaching, imply varying ideas not only about what art should look like, but what it should do. (27)

Hilton is certainly correct. The debate was now not only about style, of symbolism against naturalism, but about its basic purpose; its relationship and responsibilities to society. The distinction between art's public and private faces, implicit in the early Pre-Raphaelite revolt but organised largely against the facade of the Academy and academic conventions, assumes a far deeper significance as the certainty of Ruskin yields before the fragmentation into pure aestheticism, accountable to nothing and no-one, and a new social art. The former is the French drift into Symbolism and its contemporary equivalent in this country I shall soon examine; the latter is typified by the theories and practice of William Morris: the first modern artist, while remaining firmly and avowedly within the spirit of the Romantic tradition, who attempts to give the Fine Art form a definite use-value.

The 1836 Report of the Select Committee on Arts and Manufactures which gave first public vent to the critics of the Royal Academy was also, and indeed primarily concerned with articulating the growing concern about the relation of art to industry and trade.

The poor standard of design work incorporated into British goods was becoming increasingly apparent, even to the uninformed eyes of the owners of industry, as comparisons were made between Britain and its European competitors. A clear necessity was seen to spread the formal training in art and design beyond the narrow, Fine Art confines of the Royal Academy. Clive Ashwin states:

> ....the profession of designer, inasmuch as it could be claimed to exist as an identifiable profession in Britain, attracted none of the kudos or finacial rewards which it earned in France where it competed with fine art as a respected profession. (28)

In a rare, perhaps even unprecedented display of government concern for popular feelings on any aspect of education, an extract from the Report claims:

> This scanty supply of instruction is the more to be lamented, because it appears that there exists among the enterprising and laborious classes of our country an earnest desire for information in the Arts. (29)

The laborious classes had even, it appears, gone to the extreme lengths of petitioning the House of Commons in their clamour for more tuition in design skills directly related to manufacturing. In 1837, in the Somerset House premises occupied by the Royal Academy until its move to the National Gallery building, the government yielded to the fervour, and the first School of Design was duly opened.

The principles around which the first School of Design was established derived to a large extent from William Dyce's fact-finding tour of the continental schools of design. Faced

by the fluid and flowing drawing skills taught by the French schools of art and the pragmatic, down to earth 'science' of design practised in Germany, Dyce imported the latter.

Dyce wholeheartedly agreed with a further of Reynolds' maxims, 'Genius is the child of Imitation'; which implied, practically, that the scientific principles of design had 'been more or less truly developed from the earliest ages'. But beyond this, Dyce's system shattered any lingering pretence that the form of taught industrial design could be allied to Fine Art in the new institutional orthodoxy. It was enshrined in Dyce's philosophy that the design artist was not 'creative' but a mere copier free from the distractions of the imagination; it was concretely and explicitly stated by goverment regulations of 1843 which stated 'no person making Art his profession should be eligible for admission as a student' in a School of Design.(30) This mechanical style of tuition was to foster discontent, even in its early stages of development, from a variety of directions.

The so-called Branch or provincial schools, directly attached to the central school in London, flourished. By 1847 they numbered 14, and by 1852, when Henry Cole became Superintendent of Practical Art of the Board of Trade, they had grown to 23. But even by 1840 the Manchester branch school, under the guidance of the Fine Artist John Bell, had, in Macdonald's words, 'rapidly developed into an art school with a bias towards life drawing.' Even by the early 1840s, only a few short years after the central school at Somerset House

had opened, widely varying philosophies of art and design were being argued and occasionally put into a controversial practice. As Macdonald carries on:

> It is obvious that few of the masters or pupils were interested in Dyce's concept of a school for ornamental design only, and that the schools were ripe to become Schools of Art. (31)

From the parliamentary perspective, which had set the whole thing up in the first place, the 1849 Report of the Select Committee on the Government Schools of Design was scathing about the Schools' success in 'bringing about a significant improvementin the quality of British industrial goods'.

Important as Dyce was to the founding of the British system of art education, the most influential nineteenth century figure remains Henry Cole. No romantic dreamer, Cole's philosophy derived from the utilitarianism of Mill and Bentham. The idea of art being a useful activity beyond the provision of decoration may have been far from the minds of the Victorian middle-class, but Cole was to attempt a radical rethinking. In his mind at least he was successful, as this extract from a speech he delivered shortly before his resignationfrom the Department of Science and Art demonstrates:

> Since the year 1852, I have witnessed the conversion of twenty limp Schools of Design into one hundred and twenty flourishing Schools of Art in all parts of the United Kingdom, and other schools like them, in the Colonies and the United States. (32)

A success story perhaps, although the continuing output of government Reports bemoaning the standard of the design students suggests otherwise. Whatever the merits of Cole's contribution

to design, he could not claim credit for the reconstruction of the central design school, now situated in South Kensington, into the Royal College of Art; nor for the opening in 1871, thanks partly to private bequest and partly to funding from the University of London, of the Slade. Both of these institutions were true innovations, in their different ways, in the slow historical development of art education. Controlled and guided by Fine Artists such as Poynter, they wrestled with the arid legacy of utilitarianism and steered art training towards a sense of creativity and imagination:

> The great contribution of the Slade concept of drawing formed by Tonks and his predecessors was 'intelligent' drawing. Drawing was given a positive intellectual direction towards a search for knowledge of form, and the slavish outlining, shading, plumbing and measuring of the South Kensington system was completely superseded.(33)

Art was still 'taught', and, for that matter, taught according to principles of classical form; but it was no longer wholly subservient to a blinkered ideology of strict industrial utility.

Ruskin had long decried the efforts of the design schools in their stress on material rather than moral motivations and in their vain search for rules rather than inspiration - even if he lacked the deep passion for a fight with 'low art' that had once inspired his battles with the Royal Academy. Gillian Naylor summarises the difference between the two competing philosophies with their separate institutional bases:

> ....there was to be one important difference between the Cole group and those who drew their inspiration from Ruskin. Dedicated as they were to the improvement of industrial standards, reformers in the Cole tradition could hardly

> question the whole basis of nineteenth century society - their was, in theory, a practical rather than a moral approach....(34)

Both groups were working solidly within a 'public' definition of art; they both acknowledged that art had a position in society, and a responsibility which could never be reduced to solely aesthetic criteria; and both groups were suspicious of artists who attempted to divorce art from society. The Romantic imperative of unshackled artistic perception and creativity may have been making a surreptitious, back-door entrance into one area of the dominant ideology of art, but there was no space, in the last decades of the nineteenth century, for any form of ivory tower isolationism. As Morris believed, art must be rescued from 'the greed and incompetence of fools who do not know what life and pleasure mean'; but it must never be given to the empty hearts of mere 'art-lovers', those who believed in the frivolities of Art for Art's Sake.

Morris, like Ruskin, was drawn to the Middle Ages for a vision of the practical realisation of the aesthetic sense. Unlike Ruskin, though, Morris' inclinations led him to the belief that art should in some way be practised under the 'higher ideals' banner of socialism rather than a solely metaphysical, religious dimension. Also unlike Ruskin, Morris was to align man's 'delight in beauty' with a celebration of man's 'joy in labour' - and place both terms within the context of a more solid critique of nineteenth century capitalism.

Morris sought to actualise Ruskin's questioning aesthetic: but it was to be an actualisation focussed upon the conditions and interests of the working-class. Gillian Naylor, continuing

in the vein of the differences between government design theorists and the aesthetic critics, notes 'unlike Cole they were in no way concerned to reconcile art and industry; they had absorbed Ruskin and they had no wish to compromise with commercialism'.(35)

As anyone with a passing interest in British Left history will be aware, Morris occupies a curious and ambiguous position: akin, in terms of 'how shall we fit him in?', to the 'problem' of Marx's own 'philosophical' works which reveal such a marked resemblance to the sentiments of Morris' own writings, And certainly, when Morris states that the Fine Artist is no different from the carpenter; that the crafts of both are expressions of man's basic 'joy in labour', celebrating their own creativity and finding a sense of fulfillment in that practice which is artistically productive, he is transporting the political discourse outside of the boundaries of that which is recognsiably socialist. Morris' public redefinition of art in line with socialist principles has smacked too much of the private, of the inner, reactionary world of Romantic individualism for the more hard-nosed socialist political theorist to stomach. 'Utopian' is the common pejorative description.

Romantic socialists, however, usually low in numbers but high in rhetorical gifts and inspiration, tend to stick together. In <u>The Peculiarities of the English</u>, E.P.Thompson states:

> When William Morris brought the romantic and the Marxist critiques together, and wrote of the 'innate moral baseness' of the capitalist system he did not indicate a moral superstructure derivative from an economic base. He meant - and he abundantly demonstrated his meaning - that capitalist society was founded upon forms

> of exploitation which are simultaneously economic, moral and cultural. (36)

Morris learned his basic Romanticism, his mixture of Catholicism and medievalism that was to inspire his early rebellious yearnings and guide his later practice, during his time at Oxford: then an institution caught up in the virulent reaction against utilitarian philosophy and economics. With fellow student Burne-Jones, he declared a 'Crusade and Holy Warfare against the age'; a counter-cultural strategy of Romantic revolt and a bohemian questioning of, again, the market and general social relations of artistic practice.

The path for the Crusade, the battlegraound on which the cultural wars were to be fought, was art. The Crusaders' banners were those drawn from the imagery of the Middle Ages; perceived, in the words of Thompson's biography of Morris, as 'a real community with values and an art of its own, sharply contrasted with those of Victorian England.'(37) And this, of course, is the essential property of Morris' socialism which has attracted the despairing attention of the cynics and the hard-nosed. No socialist, presumably, is averse to an art which declares its 'truth to nature' - which, free from stylistic and ideological contamination, embarks on the considerable and complex task of attempting to 'show things as they really are.' But underlying the Crusaders' 'truth to nature' remains a sentimental romanticising inspired by such as Keats, Blake and the PRB, which cloaks 'nature' with veils of mystery: nature must always be portrayed accurately; but its squalid nineteenth century horrors become sublimated beneath a light-

weight aesthetic veneer. So although Morris was correct in refusing to see art as just the product of an 'aesthetic faculty' - linking its operation and capacities to man's 'whole being' - charges of failure and 'deceit', and worse, have been levelled against such perceptions for their escapism.

The finer points of this debate about Morris' socialist street credibility must remain a bone of contention between Thompson and less enthusiastic commentators of the likes of Perry Anderson. What is important here is: firstly, Morris transformed the PRB aesthetic perceptions from rich idea into practice with the production of his decorative furniture, wall hangings and general household goods; and secondly that this process included, was founded upon, a radical critique of both the social organisation of industrial production and the nineteenth century attempts to press art and design into the service of this production. Whereas Ruskin and the PRB conducted an often acrimonious dialogue with the Royal Academy, their art and theory was undecided about its public face, about their degree of commitment to the radical edge of bohemian counter-cultural refusal. Despite their 'truth to nature', they relied heavily upon Romanticism's stress on individual artistic imagination. Their social face - the area which should prevent their artistic practice slipping into the production of a private, inner, Art for Art's Sake world - remains grey and equivocal: rescued only, perhaps, by Ruskin's rather confusing social critiques. Morris, however, believed he was building on the essential political functions and responsibilities of the artistic career. For all their

utopianism and dependence on the spiritual critique of Romanticism, Morris' experiments into the redefinition of art's use-value channel the bohemian refusal to 'see' in orthodox and approved ways into a thoroughgoing critique of capitalist industrial production. If it's contradictory in its formulation, it is so at the level that the early spirit of Romanticism is contradictory in the philosophies of Schiller and Schlegel. As a sociologically modern artist, Morris was subject to the opposing demands of ideologies of art deriving both from within art and from outside.

As a result of Morris' vision of the artist as a producer who could not stand aloof from society, art became public style - taken out of the secret world of the studio and the gallery and into the home and the street. 'Art was registered under the Companies Act.'(38) Art could not be created for its own sake, nor for the Academy, nor for a select public of critics and bourgeois patrons: it must be both decorative and functional; it must always be 'applied', a part of 'the fabric of living', tied in every sense to everyday life. The studio gave way to the workshop, and the galleries surrendered to books, the Victorian living room and the street.

Art, then, widened its practical horizons. Artists could apply their creative skills functionally while remaining true to the spirit of art learned from the Romantics. Utilising new techniques, the 'new art' felt as much if not more at home in the design of furniture and the book illustration of Beardsley as it did in the more limited practice of oil painting

on canvas. From the time Morris founded the design firm of Morris, Marshall and Faulkner, Fine Art Workmen in Painting, Carving, Furniture and the Metals in 1861, the Arts and Crafts movement as it came to be known exercised a considerable influence on the state of the arts and industrial design in Britain. From the Craft Guilds that members of the Company and its supporters founded, to Morris' evidence to the Royal Commission on Technical Instruction in 1882, the ideas spread - and spread into the dominant notions of art education. Pevsner states:

> The first public art school incorporating some of Morris's ideas was that which the City of Birmingham established in 1881. A special training school for jewellers and silversmiths was added to it in 1890, a fact which was recognised at the time as being 'revolutionary'. (39)

In 1887, with officers including such noted academicians as Sir Frederick Leighton and Sir John Everett Millais, the National Association for the Advancement of Art and its Application to Industry was founded. It was heavily critical of the art schools, which were still, in the closing years of the century, as inadequate to the task of educating designers for manufacturing industry as they had been 50 years earlier. And in 1896 the London County Council founded the Central School of Arts and Crafts in Upper Regent Street which, in Macdonald's words 'quickly became the largest centre for craft education in Britain.'(40)

Pevsner adds, however, that 'once this stage was reached, once a certain amout of craft instruction had penetrated into

some art schools and had become amalgamated with what already existed of trade courses, Britain did not go further.'(41) Further directions and innovations in the style of Morris were left to the Germans, and to Walter Gropius in particular.

But the public 'socialisation' of art assumed an important dimension beyond the above: simultaneously, the human being was struggling to become a work of decorative art. The age of Morris was also the age of Dandyism and the Dandy, the immaculately contrived differentiation of the artist and 'man of letters' from the masses initially pioneered by Baudelaire. Art was now sufficiently important in its public presence to confidently cross from canvas into fashion. Existing alongside the social art of Morris was a tendency which would eventually reject all calls to social idealism: a new breed of artists, the Aesthetes, the believers in an English equivalent to Art for Art's Sake and Decadence. The Aesthetes were to consider Ruskin's form of aesthetic 'naturalism', which had itself become conventional and established, as a rival doctrine - even if they continued to draw on the paintings of the period for stylistic inspiration:

> The long medieval folds with which the Pre-Raphaelites had delighted to clothe their Belle Iseults, their Marianas, the severe classic draperies in which the rival school specialised, became necessary properties of the aesthetic life. (42)

The PRB had certainly pioneered the radical chic of the artistic style - even Morris had thrown away his razor and grown his hair on leaving Oxford - but it's doubtful whether they would have approved, with the exception of Rossetti who straddled the two periods, of the ideology of art with which their style

became synonymous.

> Of this wisdom, the poetic passion, the desire of beauty, the love of art for art's sake, has most: for art comes to you professing frankly to give nothing but the highest quality to your moments as they pass, and simply for these moments' sake.
>
> Walter Pater, The Renaissance.

> Varnishing is the only artistic process with which the Royal Academicians are thoroughly familiar.
>
> Oscar Wilde.

By the last quarter of the nineteenth century the 'certainties' upon which the art of the second generation French bohemians and the Pre-Raphaelites had been based were on the point of collapse. With the rise of the new decorative arts in Britain, and of Symbolism in France, artists began increasingly to question the 'truth's around which the basic naturalist form had been constructed. Following the innovations of Impressionism, truth was becoming a function of the artistic practice or language itself - rather than as signifying a fundamental relationship, 'deep' or otherwise, to an unchanging, objective external reality. The conventions of narration, illusion and anecdote, which had survived relatively intact through previous upheavals, were tested, found wanting, and thrown out. Linda Nochlin captures the spirit of this radical epistemological experimentation:

> ....the transformation of the Realist concept of truth or honesty, meaning truth or honesty to one's perception of the external physical or social world, to mean truth or honesty

> either to the nature of the material - i.e. to the nature of the flat surface - and/or to the demands of one's inner 'subjective' feelings or imagination rather than to some external reality. (43)

The reasons for this artistic turn-about are complex. In philosophy, the dominance of positivism and empiricism were being questioned. Green and Bradley's neo-Hegelian idealism was promoting a brief spell of dominance of 'mind' over external reality: materialism was yielding to metaphysics - and spirit, in the Hegelian sense, although not tangibly 'real', was at least apparently more real than the matter celebrated by empiricist thought. With Freud's psychological investigations into the powers and meanings of the unconscious, something beneath the purely sensory which had for so long satisfied the artist's curiosity, there was a certain legitimation for inner reflection and expression. It may be partly accounted for, also, as Hauser suggests, in the more widely experienced first traces of doubt in Britain's historical mission, as the Empire showed its first signs of decline along with the power of the economy. And more than at just the level of metaphorical analogy, the movement in art continued to reflect a more general sense of capitalist cultural and social modernity - change for change's sake and the celebration of originality. It certainly had a lot to do with the influence of France over the English artistic elite, which had never been so pronounced. But whatever its causes, it signalled the complete collapse of art's concepts of taste, beauty, purpose and meaning back into itself.

The artist did not shock the bourgeoisie accidentally now - he did so deliberately and with passionate feeling. The

style of the Dandy, a parody of high bourgeois dress and behaviour, is one element of the fully-conscious artistic desire to sever diplomatic, cultural and, in some cases economic relations with the non-artistic world. The artist is again the deliberate bohemian outsider.

Art is now single-mindedly produced for artists; never for the philistine tastes of the middle-class. Decadence, Aestheticism, Art for Art's Sake, whatever the phenomenon may be called, is not so much distinguished by the strength of its ant-capitalist feelings as by its emothionally profound distaste for the artistically naive, uncultured ignorance of the ruling class and the masses. The hatred of the philistine that is always implicit in the spirit of Romanticism, whatever its humanitarian postures, and the desire to escape the prosaic, trivialising worldview of the bourgeoisie so strong in the French bohemian tradition, survives, peaks and is translated into the British context at the turn of the century.

The model is Baudelaire, the original Dandy. But if the essence of Aestheticism is captured in one line of his Paradis Artificiels - 'Natural things exist only a little, reality lies only in dreams' - the broader manifestos of the movement were written by Pater, 'not the fruit of experience, but experience itself, is the key'.

Pater demands 'intellectual excitement', and art becomes cerebral, completing the process of artistic disaffection from social reality and social responsibility. Even in the 'applied' art of Beardsley, the decorative themes used are more akin to

the intellectualising strains of French Symbolism than to anything drawn from the less heady English tradition.

And art is similarly defended, in its isolation, with an intellectual wit and eloquence beyond the more Presbyterean capabilities of the defenders of the ancien regime that was in the process of being overthrown. If the idea of Art for Art's Sake was abhorently foreign to the Victorian England Ruskin inhabited, with his semi-religious demand for the subordination of the 'experience' of art to nature, the new creed's right to exist was defended with a verbal style matching its required dress. As William Gaunt states, depicting the most famous public trial and assessment of Aestheticism's values, Wilde was defending 'not only the artist's right to say what he liked, but also his right to go his own way of living. Not only had he transgressed, in fact, against the moral regulations laid down, but he did not believe in those regulations'.(44)

Wilde had been an early friend of Ruskin in his period of residence in Chelsea. But the moral divergence was irreconcilable, with Wilde's homosexual escapades, his references to opium smoking in The Picture of Dorian Gray (like the French Symbolist milieu, the English Aesthetes had a predilection for the artistic helping-hand of hashish, morphine and opium), and the subversive colours he had flown in The Soul of Man Under Socialism. Wilde had stated 'disobedience, in the eyes of anyone who has read history, is man's original virtue': Wilde's problem was that his inquisitors did not appear to be readers of history.

If the rather sad spectacles of Oscar Wilde's public dissections were both the most notorious public examinations of Aestheticism's lifestyle and the first nails in its coffin - to signal, if nothing else, the move from the draped Pre-Raphaelite dress to an exaggerated sober style based more on the ideals of virility and the delights of the outdoor life - Whistler's brush with Ruskin marked the style's artistic interrogation. In Whistler's libel suit against Ruskin in 1878, the cynical but pleasurable postures of Art for Art's Sake met the moralistic insistence on the essential relevance of art to society now embedded in the English art establishment, of which Ruskin, for all his earlier outbursts, was a respected pillar. English Art for Art's Sake was on trial - challenged in its social and moral indifference by Ruskin's review of Whistler's Arrangement in Black No.111 exhibited at the Grosvenor Gallery. Whistler was accused, in Ruskin's usual indelicate manner, of 'flinging a pot of paint in the public's face'. He was effectively, and certainly according to Whistler, doubting the artist's professional abilities as an artist. That Whistler won the case, with the smallest possible damages, is less important than the reasons why he brought it to court and the way he conducted his attack. Using all the facets of his barbed wit, the artist virtually single-handedly (such was the force of Ruskin's power over the material prospects of artists that Whistler found sympathisers reluctant to endorse his prosecution) demolished the pretensions of Ruskin's proxy defence, ripping apart the foundations of art's 'moral' stance in the process.

As Gaunt recounts, for Whistler:

> The artist was not a teacher and he resented any efforts others might make to teach him. He was not a reformer and he did not want to be reformed. He was a being apart, cultivating with a candid selfishness his own rare gift, and indifferent to its effects upon the understanding of the masses. (45)

Whistler's artist was far removed from the prophetic visionary proposed by Ruskin. It's difficult to imagine Whistler devoting time, as Ruskin, Rossetti and Browne had done, to the improvement of the artistic skills and taste of the lowly artisans. The artist was not a proletarian but an aristocrat; superior both to nature and the society in which he regrettably found himself living. Nature was ugly, and the artist's 'special relationship' was ended.

Art was sensuous and esoteric. In such figures as Simeon Solomon, Beardsley and Wilde, the artistic style of life, with its bizarre mix of religion and sexual inversions, comes increasingly to be depicted in paintings and design. Put another way, the artist deliberately tries to turn his life into a 'costly and useless' work of art. Existing alongside the experiments into social art practised by Morris was a movement determined that art should have no use value whatsoever. If English Aestheticism could not match the depths of poverty and despair that its Parisian equivalent achieved, it was equally private. It spurned society and social institutions; its culture was constructed around institutions consciously designed to exclude non-artists. It didn't care overmuch for politics, and it couldn't give a toss for the furthering

of artistic and aesthetic ideals through education. It realised that the capitalist art market was important: but it was damned if it was going to reform it for other than personal reasons.

But just as both positions can be accomodated within the Romantic tradition, so both, in the sociological sense I've been emphasising, remain bohemian in their refusal to see either art or the society within which it is located according to dominant rules and conventions. The 'formally free' artist, raised in a capitalist culture, always confronts that culture with the accusation of being one step behind the times. The basic themes and concerns underlying the bohemian refusal do not change: only the style and direction changes as the various elements of the Romantic critique are appropriated and applied as a way of making sense of a changing cultural world.

Notes and References: Chapter Six.

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2. ibid. p.158
3. ibid. p.183
4. cited in Ashwin, 1975, p.6
5. Fuller, 1980, p.143
6. cited in Pevsner, op.cit, p.195
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10. Pevsner, op.cit., p.225
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13. Ruskin, 1980, p.115
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16. Ruskin, op.cit. p.79
17. Fleming, 1971, p.xvii
18. Hilton, 1970, p.57
19. Ruskin, op.cit., p.152
20. cited in Fleming, op.cit., p.53
21. Hilton, op.cit., p.107
22. Ruskin, op.cit., p.318
23. Hilton, op.cit., p.133
24. Compare, for example, Hilton p.134 and Fleming p.68
25. cited in Hilton, op.cit., p.135
26. Ruskin, op.cit., p.292/3

27. Hilton, op.cit., p.138/9
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30. cited in Macdonald, 1970, p.151
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34. Naylor, 1980, p.19
35. ibid. p.101
36. Thompson, in Thompson, 1978, p.84
37. Thompson, 1977, p.28
38. Hilton, op.cit., p.170
39. Pevsner, op.cit., p.265
40. Macdonald, op.cit., p.297
41. Pevsner, op.cit., p.265
42. Gaunt, 1975, p.63
43. Nochlin, 1971, p.236
44. Gaunt, op.cit., p.157
45. Gaunt, op.cit., p.85

CHAPTER SEVEN

> Only a young art can be popular, for as soon as it grows older it is necessary, in order to understand it, to be acquainted with the earlier stages in its development. To understand an art means to realise the necessary connection between its formal and material elements; as long as an art is young, there is a natural, unproblematical relation between its content and its means of expression, that is to say, there is a direct path leading from its subject-matter to its forms. In the course of time these forms become independent of the thematic material, they become autonomous, poorer in meaning, and harder to interpret, until they become accessible only to a quite small stratum of the public.
>
> Arnold Hauser, The Social History of Art.

> The basic law of the art market is that art has no intrinsic value, no value as material. Its price reflects only two things: desire and scarcity. Its scarcity can be controlled, to some extent; and nothing is more manipulable than desire.
>
> Robert Hughes, The Shock of the New.

The rise to pivotal status of the bohemian artist is historically located in the rise of the 'free artist'. Bohemianism is not only 'something to do with art', but assumes that the 'something' is expressed in opposition to the dominant standards of taste, morality, style and the general social relations of capitalist art and culture. It requires little historical research, and possibly less imagination, to understand that such an ideology is patently inconceivable under a system of artistic and social relations rigidly structrured by the demands of the

church and aristocratic patronage. On the contrary, it depends for its provocation, dynamism and penetration on the uncertainties and vicissitudes engendered by the burgeoning system of capitalist market relations and the accompanying 'self-modernising' systems of cultural relations.

When the multifarious ways Art Theory has defined and confused the 'problem of modernism' is considered, it should be remembered that here the defining standard is sociological: that the 'modern artist' exists, not defined by a plurality of style which keeps glossy art journals in lucrative business attempting to precisely fathom the birth and death of Modernism, but by virtue of his or her subjection or exposure to the 'problem situations' of art's social presence and political allegiance; to the problem of selling the artistic product in a market geared to and governed by the principles of capitalism's general system of commodity production and distribution; and certainly of no less importance, the problem of the artist's relationship to a practice increasingly mediated by formal bureaucratic institutions.

I noted, moreover, that the artistic expression of wider cultural turbulence, the mode of rationalising the break with the infinitely simpler, defined world of direct patronage occurred with the Romantic denial of the Enlightenment as a valid and relevant way of explaining the world in general and the artist's position in particular. And, I've argued, this position of questioning, first elaborated two hundred years ago, remains pertinent to more contemporary problems and

definitions of artistic practice. Romanticism, in the nineteenth century sense of style of Delacroix and the Pre-Raphaelites, may, as the art historians assure, have perished at the more cynical hands of twentieth century Modernism, but the problems of artistic production under a system of capitalist social relations stubbornly persist - and were as much experienced by Braque, the Surrealists, Matisse and the countless other twentieth century 'names' as by Morris and Courbet. Romanticism has provided the historical skeleton for the body of artistic practice to build on, and 'great art' in the past two centuries has seen the bare bones fleshed-out by the bohemian refusal.

But similarly I've taken pains to demonstrate that to define bohemianism by reference to ideological content is an exercise fraught with dangers for the unwary social historian of art. Not only can bohemianism legitimately embrace what usually appear as wildly divergent social, political and market attitudes, concentrating solely on the historical profusion of bohemian colour risks limiting the concept's useful life to documenting a ragbag of gossip and the celebration of every half-crazed deadbeat who's ever put on a cravat, black trench-coat and wide-brimmed hat, picked up a sketchbook and pronounced his or herself an artist. For we've seen that the artistic circles of nineteenth century Europe condoned and popularised a style of personal eccentricity that varied from the plain unusual to the uncompromisingly depraved. If nothing else, an offshoot of the Romantic ideology of art's purpose and privileged status was that 'creative talent' and 'genius' largely became synonymous with behaviour that in others would

be considered a serious tendency towards the antisocial if not a blatant psychotic condition requiring safe and long-term institutionalisation. The 'results' of bohemian decadence and depravity are amply demonstrated by such as Baudelaire, Wilde, Paul Verlaine, Rimbaud and the tubercular Italian Modigliani. Ever since the time of Murger's chronicles, the romance of bohemian decadence has attracted the hopeful, the would-be and the poseur.

History, in the solid shape of the art establishment, has separated the true, authentic 'genius' from the also rans, and the content of the bohemian style - its idiosyncracies, its mannerisms and local colour - has been documented by such as Richard Miller and Steve Bradshaw, and recounted in set-piece chronicles by, among others, Kerouac and Hemingway. But the problem with using such accounts as reliable summaries and chunks of bohemian history is their essential inability to penetrate the surface tension of the style: convincing portrayals of the various whirls in which the bohemian refusal is set, they can manage only one finger tentatively prodding the sociological perspective which locates the 'something about art' in its material and historical setting. The problem is similar to that seen in Musgrove, Martin, Roszak etc., in their attempts to locate the counter-culture in a purely abstract spirit of bohemian ideology. The history of modern art as a process gripped by a fierce dialectic in its obsessive striving for a 'new art' is lost.

The conditions structuring this dialectic derive from the enrollment of artistic practice into the auxillary ranks

of the triumphant forces of capitalist cultural modernisation. Whether the bohemian refusal is targetted on the demands and conditions of the wider culture, or whether its questioning remains essentially insular and incestuous, assaulting only the institutional base of art itself, it always throws into sharp relief the failings of the 'dominant culture' of art. Its style is to criticise, modify and reject the established ways of perceiving the methods, use-value and metaphysical 'purpose' of art. The belief is profound and deeply set that art is the pivot of culture.

So in this sense, although in this sense only, the concept and practice of modernisation within art has been a 'generational' phenomenon. This is not to say that radical artistic breaks and changes have necessarily been the product of a surging tide of youthful, fresh-faced rebelliousness - the history of art is replete with examples of ex-clerks and ageing former civil servants who never raised a paintbrush or pen with serious intention to become hailed as the innovative genius until they were well past the age of 'youth'. But it does imply an ideology that demands artistic innovation to be both necessary and desirable; to be the partial or absolute condemnation of accepted traditions and practices. The necessity of constant iconoclasm and innovation in the name of a usually ill-defined notion of artistic progress locates the tendency of Romantic, capitalist art, in its rhetoric and values, as the mirror-image of the society in which it exists. Capitalism requires cultural modernity, an updating of its ways of making sense of the world, for its survival; the

very idea of modern art and the modern artist, without a parallel stress on the negation of the old, is unthinkable. This is the emphasis detailed in the last chapter, where Ruskin and the PRB attacked the dogmatism of the Royal Academy, where Morris and the Arts and Crafts movement attacked the narrowly defined capitalist use-value of art and artistic training, and where both of these forms of refusal were rejected by the inner concerns of Aestheticism.

But although culture and art appear to inhabit the same universe, and subscribe to the same laws of motion and change, the analogy, although useful should not be overextended. Both promote, invent and repress new methods and ideologies of production, consumption and distribution of their respective commodities. But beneath the slick, innovative veneer of a radically modern capitalist culture remains the certain demand that some elements of the older ways of making sense of the world remain sacrosanct and above the pressure for change. A cultural system that abandoned, wantonly or under force, the legitimacy of the state to govern, control and preserve social and economic relations; that rejected the pursuit of profit as a commendable and revered exercise; that worked according to principles of real social use-value rather than to those of market exchange; and that surrendered minority control and ownership of the means of production of value to democratic processes, could not be realistically defined as one gripped by the spirit of capitalism. However else ways of making sense of the capitalist world may be modified, conditions and

ideologies such as these must remain constant and essentially unchanged.

Modern art, in its sociological sense the product of the early turbulence and cultural dislocations of an emerging and solidifying capitalist culture, has steadfastly continued to recognise no such constants or time-honoured principles. To meet the stringent demands of its parent philosophy (the one body of cultural statements it constantly recognises and refers to), it discredits and rejects all previous movements and standards. A point which returns the analysis to the trinity of 'problem situations' conditioning the artist's response both to his practice and to the wider culture.

To rest content with a mode of analysis approximating, however closely, the inner dynamics of modern art to the modernising ideologies of capitalist culture is to remain locked in an existential never-never land that points to and celebrates the moment of stylistic refusal without grounding its appearance in the world of social reality that artists, as well as art historians and sociologists, inhabit. Although this former world of free-thinking, unbridled lyrical speculation is not necessarily an unpleasant place to be, and although the spirits of Schiller and Schlegel still dance in the stratosphere of philosophy and art history, one unpleasant problem remains to be answered: what makes the 'solutions' of the pioneers of early Romanticism, and the 'solutions' of generations of artist hero figures since the birth of Romanticism still relevant to the problems of artistic production in an otherwise largely restructured cultural world? That the

problems and solutions already referred to (and to come) have maintained a real presence in the artistic imagination until at least the late 1960s is, of course, a central premise of this work.

On the psychological motivations of such modes of speculation, it must certainly be deeply reassuring, definitely 'romantic' to believe that successive generations of bohemian artists have been directly attuned to the noumenal essences, the underlying realities of capitalism; that the rebellious element in modern art was a structured and considered comment on those 'certainties' of capitalist culture that remain constant amidst the swell of change. In this sense it would be pleasant to think - possibly as radical sociologists searching for indications of true political resistance beyond ritual - that the bohemian ignorance of the capitalist work ethic was a profound comment heralding the emergence of a post-industrial, even post-revolutionary consciousness refusing compromise, control and dilution.

In the examples of bohemian ideology seen, there is certainly a hard element committed to the practical autonomy of the mode of artistic production: that whatever may be the demands and hardships of other spheres of production, the 'free' Romantic artist could work according to the less stringent demands of task-orientation, opposing the irrelevent solutions of the wider culture with an ideology that refuses to separate work and leisure. Time, and the constraints it otherwise imposes on the worker, yields to the familiar artistic demand of 'losing oneself in work'. But in the theories of Morris,

Ruskin, even Marx, there is a tendency to make daring extrapolations from these or similar ideologies. The response of all nineteenth century Romantics is to scan the past: for models of unalienated labour; for a 'truer' system of production founded upon the satisfaction of more natural wants; for a better society in general. Whether what is turned up is a vision of sublime Gothic medievalism with a society of 'masters and men', or an image flourishing in classical graces from the splendour of ancient Rome and Athens, or a model of harmonious and idyllic primitive communism of fishermen, matters only in degree: the lucrative nostalgia industry is born with Romanticism. The past has always exercised a hold on contemporary consciousness, but in the nineteenth century 'history' assumes a new meaning and force in its shaping and definition of the present. Backwards to find the model for the present and the future: and the best model, the most satisfying ideal of production and labour found in history is the artist. The bohemian artist seen in the last two chapters exploits and revels in the 'romance' of Romanticism's yearnings for unified ideals of cultural practice. It remains a central premise of the Romantic counter-cultural critique of the contemporary world.

But however much the commentator may in turn politically or spiritually romanticise the style of bohemian refusal, the warnings of Marx should be heeded. Beware the dangers of imaginative speculation from given cultural style to the realities of social existence: the equation should always be phrased in the reverse. The point here, and hopefully the point so far, is that bohemianism and bohemian cultural

ideology is a complex affair. Not in Raymond Williams' sense, which leads him to bewail 'the number of times I've wished I had never heard of the damned word' as he sits to ponder again the complex operations, the complex mediations, and the complex implications of yet another definition of culture: more in the sense that acknowledging complexity warns against both unsubstantiated speculation and taking the line of least resistance to earth.

But its complexity notwithstanding, bohemianism remains open to a mode of sociological analysis free of the pejorative effects of crude materialism, rampant existentialism wrapped in a pseudo-Marxist shroud, as well as unabashed idealism. By searching the history of the institutional, political and market forces mediating the artist's relationship to capitalist culture we can make make material sense of the bohemian personality and its role in the artistic dialectic. The constant stress on innovation and change becomes understandable in terms of a deep but conscious dread of market incorporation of practice and product. The exposure of modern artists to the vagaries of the capitalist market lends a certain credibility to the doctrines of Schiller: it engenders simultaneously a fear and hatred of the non-artistic philistine and a sense of outraged concern that commercialism signifies the collapse and negation of artistic validity and authenticity.

On the political face of modern art, the nineteenth century heralds the emergence of a conscious questioning of the use-value of art and the nature of the artist's role in society. Although

this does not require that all bohemian artists conspired to overthrow the root causes of the political antagonisms between art and bourgeois culture, it does assume that the experience of art conflicted with its handed-down image. In its various ideological formulations, bohemianism debates with the idea that art must, in Carl Oglesby's words,

> Deflect, divert, apologise, change the subject, prove either that our gods are virtuous and our direction right or that no gods are virtuous and no direction right and that rebellion ought therefore to forego history and take on the Cosmos. (1)

In the twentieth century the old artistic communities disintegrate and the 'classic bohemian style' dissipates. Groaning under the combined weight of a romanticising nostalgia and a philistine vilification, the remains of the nineteenth century dream world of Dandies, Decadents, Art for Art's Sake, an art for the people, and gentle medievalism collapses in 1914. But the problems the old styles had addressed remained

And, as we shall see soon, the solutions became ever more bizarre and outrageous as fresh political avenues were entered, as the market sought to exercise greater control over a form of cultural expression that had hitherto always seemed at least one step in front, and as art's institutional framework encroached further into the 'free' world of the artistic personality.

The light-hearted attitudes of the 'naughty nineties', even the moral and political earnestness of such as Morris, Ruskin, Courbet and Pissarro became increasingly searched for 'incorrect' partiality as their anachronistic qualities became apparent, and as the puritanism that accompanied the experim-

entation acquired an insidious tinge. The desire to 'take art seriously', to invest its practice and production with qualities of social power beyond even the wildest dreams of Schiller and the early Romantics, becomes overpowering in the first half of the century. The earlier style of bohemia, nostalgia for the good old days of Murger, Verlaine, Rimbaud and the Impressionists, lingered on in the café society of Paris, but the true spirit of bohemian refusal, suitably modernised for the new century, was now to be found in the rise of the avant-garde.

Carried on in the name of liberation, even the 'public', art became increasingly distanced from those it claimed to ultimately serve. The insularity of the avant-garde, the vanguard of the cultural revolution became, and remains where it still exists, complete: in Tom Wolfe's words, 'the public is not invited.'(2) But then it never really was. It may scoff at the pretensions of the new art, laugh at or even admire the offered results, but 'the masses' play no part in the generative and critical processes of Modernism: as Wolfe carries on, 'the game is completed and the trophies distributed long before the public knows what has happened.'(3)

The term Modernism is not thrown in lightly: its meaning now taken back into the world of art, it is raised as the artistic standard of the new century. In its forms it proves the point of the critic Leo Steinberg, when he argues that the essential 'anxiety' of modern art transmits to the spectator, making the encounter 'a general existential predicament'(4)

> The keyword of the new century was modernity. Modernity meant believing in technology and not craft, in human perfectability not original sin; above all, in a ceaseless consumption of things and of images of things.
>
> Robert Hughes, The Shock of the New

> To be against what is new is not to be modern. Not to be modern is to write yourself out of the scene. Not to be in the scene is to be nowhere. No, in an age of avant-gardism the only possible strategy to counter a new style which you detest is to leapfrog it. You abandon your old position and your old artists, leaping over the new style, land beyond it, and say: 'Oh that's nothing. I've found something newer and better....way out here.'
>
> Tom Wolfe, The Painted Word

'Modern' means one thing to the historian and social scientist generally accustomed to conceptualising change in terms of broad epochal sweeps and interminably lengthy modes of production: to the art commentator, critic, theorist and artist, generally unfeterred by the rigours of precise causal explanation and the necessity of working within accepted paradigms of knowledge, it quite often implies something, many things, entirely different.

Do we really know the date of the first truly modernist painting? Was it with the first exhibition of the Fauves in 1905? Or with Cézanne's impassioned plea in 1904 to 'treat nature by the cylinder, the sphere, the cone'? Or was it

earlier with the Post-Impressionism of Gaugin and Van Gogh, or, Tim Clark suggests, even earlier with the exhibition in 1865 of Manet's Olympia? Should we really care? Unfortunately, in part I must, for although the impact of such debates on style rarely impinges on the consciousness of those outside History of Art departments and non-readers of Screen, it is difficult to raise the problem of how Art, rather than sociology, conceived and faced the problems of Modernism without becoming at least partially involved in such concerns.

Whatever else the birth of the twentieth century heralded, it saw a series of concerted attempts to finally bury the realist art of the previous century. However much Courbet, the Pre-Raphaelites, and the Symbolists may have reacted against dominant styles, and however Ruskin and Morris questioned the canons and dogmas of art's formal institutional base, they assumed to varying degrees and with varying motivations a basic accord between nature and man: however much the fiery side of the spirit of Romanticism introduced the passionate, the sublime and the metaphysical, there remained, somewhere, an underlying security that permitted a belief in the authenticity and value of what Lukacs called 'concrete typicality'.

If the new amalgam of styles possesses any one defining characteristic it cannot be other than its declared belief that the 'objective world', celebrated in its virtues by realism, is and can only be a fundamentally problematical affair in its organisation and presentation. The certainty of the 1850s generation of artists on both sides of the channel, even the

provocative questioning of Impressionism and Symbolism is replaced by a profound distrust of any form of art that surrenders its apparatus and methods to a simple synthesis of the subjective and the objective. When Picasso proclaimed in an interview in 1923: 'they speak of naturalism in opposition to modern painting. I would like to know if anyone has ever seen a natural work of art. Nature and art, being two different things, cannot be the same thing. Through art we express our conception of what nature is not(5)', he was declaring <u>against</u> straightforward notions of empiricist objectivity and <u>for</u> the demand that the practice of painting raises real problems of perception, of depth and abstraction that can never be simply reduced to the proposition 'this is what I see'. The young artists of the early years of the century felt that the celebrated victories of the past had missed the point: and the point was the relativity of artistic ways of seeing. However much Freud's theories of dreams and the unconscious and Nietzsche's statements on the inherent absurdity of the human condition influenced the new art, the most striking parallel is between Modernist styles and the revelations of contemporary physics. As Heisenberg and quantum mechanics demolished the 'certainties' of classical theoretical physics, so Cézanne and the later Cubists 'argued that reality includes the painter's efforts to perceive it'.(6)

What this meant in terms of art's conventions of seeing and its subsequent restyled methods is captured by Sylvia Harvey:

> The tendency to replace an interest in the

> relationship between specific means of aesthetic representation and a social reality conceived of as distinct from those means, with an exclusive concern with the means of representation (quite often an exclusive concern with the means of representation which make up the range of artistic practices.)(7)

The debate over relationships was with Symbolism and Impressionism.

Impressionism prefigured the new spirit and perspectives in art by its refusal to accept the validity of an absolutist picture of reality with nature as an immovable, ideal state. All one could be certain of as an Impressionist sat before the café crowds or on the banks of the Seine was that instant of the historical tableaux unfolding in front of one's eyes. By saying 'to the best of my knowledge, this is what I know of the here and now', Impressionism expressed the relativism of belief combined with an aggressive pragmatism which was to become part of the unconscious of the twentieth century Western personality. Similarly, Symbolism had besieged, with partial success, the citadels of realism and objectivity as the only reference points of art. Asking 'whatever happened to realism?', Linda Nochlin offers:

> To adopt the Saussurean model of language, with its three-part division of all communications systems into signifier (or vehicle), signified (or what is conveyed) and sign (what comes into being through the association of the other two), we may say that the Symbolists of the nineties had by no means done away with the signified: they had simply made it relatively and deliberately private, ambiguous, and 'unavailable to translation' by emphasising the self-determination of the signifiers and the independence of the resulting signs from material, external reality. (8)

Nochlin's use of Saussure's terminology of linguistic theory to develop the background to the death of realism is 'significant'. Certainly with the Symbolists, but to a far greater degree with the declared Modernists, the experiments consciously stated an intention to reorganise the language of artistic production and consumption. By rejecting the old stylistic conventions of perspective, dimension, and authenticity of colour and line, the new art was searching for a directness and truth of form at the expense of what the nineteenth century Romantics had seen as the correspondence of artistic content to nature. Deliberately and vehemently primitive, Cézanne, Braque, Picasso, Matisse and their legions of followers condemn not only the images and traditions of western civilisation but also, more tellingly, its basic mode of ordering reality through communication and cultural transmission. The natural world is not dismissed; but the premises of the realist method are decried for their fundamental inability to scrape the surface of nature and for their obfuscation of genuine artistic concerns.

In this sense there remains an unbroken line of continuity between early Romanticism and the theories of Modernism and abstraction. Both maintain the belief in the essentially privileged position of the artist: but whereas earlier artists invoked the passions, the soul, and variations on religious and political themes, the new art throws its weight and considerable talents behind the powers of language. It establishes the basic premise by which the credibility and cultural

power of the artistic avant-garde must stand or fall: that by changing the form of language the social conditions generating and fostering language must inevitably follow suit. One problem for the avant-garde, as I will show in more detail later, was that the more seriously it pursued these experiments, the more seriously it took itself politically, and the more importance it placed on art as a revolutionary tool, the less seriously it tended to be taken by those outside its ranks as they became increasingly distanced from the final art product. As surely as Picasso died the richest painter in history, and as surely as Salvador Dali is the richest living painter, the private world of the avant-garde arts remained as insular, as exclusive, and as self-celebratory as any nineteenth century circle of Aesthetes.

To its credit, however, as ludicrous as some avant-garde theories of the 'public' face and power of art may have been, rarely are vague assertions of 'taking art back to the people' encountered: on the contrary. Whatever arguments may exist for stating that other forms of cultural expression were originally truly popular media, created by and for 'the people', the painters, poets and writers of the avant-garde knew the histories of their media. They knew that by following the principles of a private, self-conscious process of creation of 'great art', ratified by themselves, they were following sound historical precedent. They knew that the critical faculties of Mallarmé, Whistler and Ruskin differed only in rhetorical tone.

The ideology could be constructed as follows: We may

believe in the historical mission of the mass working-class; We may romanticise their values and their culture; Our work may be in their interests; We may even speak to them occasionally But for Christ's sake keep them away from us and our work. As a principle of the psychology of art underlying the totality of Romantic and Modernist aesthetic responses, Linda Nochlin's comment on the restricted codes and insularity of the project has the ring of truth:

> .....the creation of the avant-garde was the mirror image, the precise response to the emergence of the mass philistine audience. Kitsch and formalism are mirror images of the same impulse to keep the ever culture-hungry bourgeoisie at bay.....(9)

Developing this argument further,,Robert Hughes, commenting on the changes in the perception of the nature of the artistic personality and mission in the twentieth century states:

> The essence of the avant-garde myth is that the artist is a precursor; the truly significant work of art is the one that prepare the future. The traditional focus of culture, on the other hand, tends to treat the present (the living artist) as the culmination of the past.(10)

Modernism attempted to destroy the cult of nostalgia that had characterised art in the nineteenth century at least until the efforts of Impressionism. It threw caution to the winds and went, or thought it went, where no man or artist had gone before. Its brief was to start art afresh.

What brought the first avant-garde art party to an abrupt end, again splitting the bohemian personality into opposing constituent parts as the Paris uprisings had done in the 1830s from less catastrophic provocation, were events precipitated by a certain declaration made on August 14th 1914. Richard

Miller, with his romanticising axe to grind, can comment upon the joyous effects of the outbreak of world war on the disparate elements of European bohemia:

> And then, in August 1914, mobilisation notices appeared everywhere, announcing, particularly to the French and Germans, a romantic drama, a national Dionysian revel, a grand holiday merging everyone into a common purpose, a new life at once intense and meaningful where no one would be lonely and everybody could be somebody.(11)

Perhaps the war may have been initially embraced as the 'perfect romantic adventure'. It would, however, be more realistic, certainly more pertinent to consider the effects on the political consciousness of the avant-garde.

Those who had always been convinced of the patent absurdity and senselessness of the human condition could only have had their worst fears and premonitions confirmed, and were perhaps left pondering, in the style that Miller recounts, the choice between the continued self-imposed isolation of a rapidly fading Montmartre or the dubious pleasures of the Western Front. Who could now take history, or the view that man profited by earlier mistakes seriously? Some, those who could and did, pledged to construct a fresh cultural consciousness from the ruins that at the time signified the real and final collapse of the values and traditions of Western civilisation. By far the most interesting development during this period in terms of my pointed social history of art and the restructuring of the bohemian artistic style of refusal, was Dada. Closely followed, perhaps, by Surrealism.

DADA remains within the framework of European weaknesses, it's still shit, but from now on we want to shit in different colours so as to adorn the zoo of art with all the flags of the consulates.

Tristan Tzara, Monsieur Antipyrine's Manifesto.

O mouths, mankind is in search of a new form of speech
With which no grammarian of any language will be able to talk
And these ancient languages are so close to death
That it is really sheer habit and laziness
That allows us to go on using them for poetry
But they are like invalids who haven't the strength to say no
Look people who would soon get used to being dumb
Mime is good enough for the cinema
But we must determine to speak
To move our tongues
To splutter and stammer
We want new sounds new sounds new sounds

Guillaume Apollinaire.

As well as being a celebration of the new rights, freedoms, privileges and status of the artist, Romanticism, under its various regimental banners, stressed the call to arms against the forces of cold reason and logic. Everywhere throughout the contorted progress of nineteenth century art is the assertion that a culture dominated by these latter qualities can only ever be flat, dull, wasteful, alienating. It tuned its critiques to the institutions, inside and outside of art, it saw as furthering the interests of cultural repression and mediocrity. With all these facets sharpened to a fine edge by the 1914 war, and set in the context of this supreme act

of futility, Dada addressed the problems of artistic production, the social function of art, and the calamitous state of European culture. It pressed its talents and energies into the service of the continuing critique of rules, critical accolades, the traditions and the formal institutions of art - but in a manner far different to Ruskin and Morris, Courbet or the Aesthetes.

Never a rigidly structured political programme, nor even, strictly speaking, a concrete art style, Dada nonetheless asserted the power of art 'based on fundamentals,' in the words of Hans Arp, 'to cure the madness of the age.' A vanguard in the definitive sense of the word, Dada wanted to destroy the history of art as surely as the war seemed to be destroying the traditions and values of European culture.

From another viewpoint Boccioni, Marinetti and the Futurists had offered similar attitudes towards institutional stupidity and entrenched dogma in their radical, if ideologically dubious, celebration of science and the cult of the machine:

> By our enthusiastic adherence to futurism we propose: 1. To destroy the cult of the past, the obsession with the antique, the pedantry and formalism of the academies. 2. To despise utterly every form of imitation. (12)

Dada approved of the Futurist proposal to pull down the galleries, the libraries and the academies: but they would probably have echoed Walter Benjamin's comment on the link between the declarations and manifestos of Futurism and the nascent ideology of Fascism: 'all efforts to make politics aesthetic culminate in one thing, war.' By attempting to restructure the politics of aesthetics, Dada declared war against art.

Sarane Alexandrian comments on and reveals the essential qualities of eclecticism combined with a spirit of total, unequivocal opposition that formed the foundations of Dada's many postures:

> Dada was not a movement added to all the other movements. Rather it was an anti-movement which opposed not only all the academicians, but also all the avant-garde schools which claimed to be releasing art from the limits which confined it. Dada was a detonation of anger which showed itself in insults and buffoonery. 'Dada began not as an art form, but as a disgust' was Tristan Tzara's definition: disgust with a world racked by war, with boring dogmas, with conventional sentiments, with pedantry, and the art which did nothing but reflect this limited universe. (13)

Boredom: anathema to the Romantic spirit in any of its manifestations. Seen in the alienating, repressive effects of capitalist industry by Morris and Ruskin; in the teaching of the Royal Academy by Rossetti and his friends; in the philistinism of their parents by the first bohemians; perceived as a quality endemic to capitalist culture by the aesthetic revolt of Wilde and Whistler; and throwing the Symbolists into the escape route of the magical and the supernatural and the Futurists into the glorification of science and the machine - the Dada protest against mediocrity and cultural stagnation blamed logic and celebrated the spontaneous.

For Dada - a word first appearing in the single issue of Cabaret Voltaire, edited by Hugo Ball and published June 4th 1916 - art is at once everything and nothing. Against the 'cult of art' and bourgeois consumption, Dada came out fighting for the primacy of chance, the primitive, child art and fun; protesting at the indirect, mediated inadequacies of the

artistic and cultural forms capitalism sponsors, Tzara counters with the cult of cultural and artistic anarchy; aware of the outraged response to previous artistic revolutions, Dada shifted its focus from what is produced to the reaction the work of art or art product could provoke, and made direct provocation of an art-consuming bourgeois public the lynchpin of its amorphous programme. In Tzara's own words:

> We have done violence to the snivelling tendencies in our natures. Every infiltration of this sort is macerated diarrhoea. To encourage this sort of art is to digest it. What we need are strong, straightforward, precise works which will be forever misunderstood. Logic is a complication. Logic is always false. It draws the superficial threads of concepts and words towards illusory conclusions and centres. Its chains kill, an enormous myriapod that asphyiates independence. (14)

The problem for the Dadaists, with Tzara's arguments always in mind, was their inability to resolve the dilemma of converting experimentation with artistic form into anything more than that: in other words, of changing art into a form of direct practical activity, unmediated and spontaneous, that could indeed change the face of the social context of cultural language. Practical and conceptual freedom <u>within</u> art had usually distanced a bemused public, as we saw in the chapters on the nineteenth century. Although this was the consumption-effect Dada ostensibly strove to achieve, the limits of its wider impact were always apparent. As participant Hans Richter both admits and enjoys:

> Our feeling of freedom from rules, precepts, money and critical praise, a freedom for which we paid the price of an excessive distaste and contempt for the public, was a major stimulus. (15)

Whatever the rhetoric of liberty and freedom carried beyond the realms of artistic practice (and whatever the subsequent commercial success the movement achieved), Dada began as and remained a private art in its conception: a dance performed by artists for an artistic audience with the public, initially, left either hammering on the doors of the cabaret in outrage or passing by in disbelief and disinterest. There remains little difference between Dada and the self-consciously elitist, profoundly anti-philistine styles of Aestheticism and Art for Art's Sake. The artist inspired by Romanticism had always rejected rights claimed by outsiders to influence and direct his work (seen as much in the 'social' art of Morris as in bohemianism's more arcane forms), and had always acclaimed art as a way of seeing, a mode of perception superior to others. Differences within this broad spectrum of bohemian cultural refusal exist at the level of what conclusions are drawn from this artistic truism.

The true revolutionary impact of Dada was its belief in the art of provocation. Its legacy for modern art, and perhaps for political theorists within art, has always been its celebration of a state of spontaneous anarchy - an attitude which has not only introduced the valuable concept of Fun into the otherwise staid totality of the artistic discourse (however much the hilarity usually appears to reside at the level of irony), but which has also consistently questioned the nature of the artistic product and its use-value to a cultural system governed by rules of commodity production and sale. The

art historian Edward Lucie-Smith summarises this contribution:

> ....the work of art was to play a new role, and, once more, this role was one which minimised its status as a possession, as something owned. It was, instead, an instrument through which states of feeling could be explored. (16)

A further importance was Dada's use of newsprint. From Tzara's Dada and Francis Picabia's 391 to the host of other papers and journals associated with Dada's European 'cell' structure, and wider afield as in Marcel Duchamp's New York based RongWrong, the movement offered a witty and personalised immediate critique of its opponents.

But also, Dada as a movement was one of the first trends within modern art to question a central strand of Romantic theory: that art is a personal, individual exercise. Dada attempted to keep the art product out of the reach of the bourgeois philistine; but, equally significantly, it denied that the creation of 'great art' was the product of applied 'individual genius'. It still maintained an unshakeable faith in the Romantic metaphysical status of art, the purity of some 'higher purpose' descending the tortured route from Schiller. But its response to the problem of working towards this end stressed a sense of personal and collective spontaneity and anarchy that flew in the face of all earlier, more precisely programmed and more self-consciously artistic attempts. It was left to Breton and the Surrealists to attempt to organise these principles; to politically charge them; to press them 'more directly' into the service of liberation; 'to set people free: to save them, as evangelists and revolutionaries promise

salvation, by an act of faith'. (17)

They also decried the ideology of the power of 'individual talent', which could only result in an artificiality of artistic practice: 'Surrealism is within the compass of every unconscious....'

In Maurice Nadeau's words, the founders of the Surrealist movement saw their mission as:

> a discovery of continents which had not yet been systematically explored: the unconscious, the marvellous, the dream, madness, hallucinatory states - in short, if we add the fantastic and the marvellous as they occurred throughout the world, the other side of the logical decor. (18)

This represented the declaration of not only a new way of art, but a totally new, revolutionary way of knowledge: a system of radical devices to heighten and restructure perceptions of cultural sense that would change both the way art could be practised and the ways life beyond art could be constructed. By a belief in direct political action Surrealism preached an art linked to the interests of the working-class, enlisting the powers of the unconscious and the unknown as hitherto unrecognised or dismissed allies against the forces of bourgeois logic, reason and repression. It carried the 'essence of the avant-garde myth' that Hughes described to new heights of artistic achievement and new depths of pompous pretension and self-deception in its theoretical and practical questioning of bourgeois culture.

The antecedents of the Surrealist style of painting are as easily seen in the works of Hieronymous Bosch, Blake, Moreau

and Rousseau as their stress on the unconscious and their flirtation with the pornographic and the sexually violent is seen in Freud and de Sade respectively. But it also owed a considerable debt to Dada, as Alexandrian explains:

> Without the Dada experience, surrealism would not have existed in the form in which we know it. It ran the risk of being a continuation of symbolism topped up with polemic. During the two years of Dada, the surrealists underwent a physical and spiritual training which allowed them thereafter to confront problems equipped with a knowledge of avant-garde struggle which they had not previously possessed. It is not true to say that surrealism was born after Dada, like a phoenix arising from the ashes. It was born during Dada....(19)

Under the tightly organised discipline of Breton, the Surrealists attacked the problems of social revolution and the grey areas of the artist's political commitment with a mode of analysis and conviction informed by the Dada experiments. And although the forms of direction and orientation fluctuated wildly, the basic commitment to redefining the language and premises of the political discourse remained close to the Surrealist heart. It also directed other qualities in the direction of the crusade. Nadeau comments:

> Love, to the same degree as revolution, was one of the fundamental inspirations of the surrealists. Their reiterated attacks against society were also inspired by the fact that it did not permit the free and complete realisation of desire no less demanding than hunger. Freud had made the libido the essential motive-force of behaviour, and the study of his patients had convinced him that the metamorpheses imposed by society were far from being beneficial to the individual. In this sense, Freud had taken love down from the literary pedestal, not by diminishing it of course, but by showing, on the contrary, its universal empire. (20)

And the concept of the universal empire was relished by the Surrealists. Love, the world of unconscious dreams, the determining power of chance, the range of the hallucinations and distortions of the neurotic personality, were assembled and celebrated at the unveiling of a new reality. In place of logic, and bourgeois religion and morality, which split the powers of liberation and forced a mode of personal and social artificiality, was placed a higher, sur-reality. Always aimed ultimately at the wider cultural sphere, the revolution, the creation of this new reality, was to take place initially within the personal world of the artists themselves. In its style the Surrealist revolution drew heavily on the time-honoured models of Baudelaire and Rimbaud; in its essential concerns the Surrealist world honoured the Romantic struggle of all artists who questioned their existence within an antagonistic society - to control, first and foremost, their own conditions of labour.

But it's at the level of the Surrealist political programme - its attempts to reconstruct the role of the artist in society and society itself - that the style gains importance in the history of bohemian ideology. It's here that Surrealism's lasting impact lies in the social history of art; and here that the dilemmas and contradictions lie in the programme's attempts to reconcile the demands of artistic avant-garde authenticity with credible political action.

Walter Benjamin once stated:

> One can declare that a work which exhibits the right tendency need show no further quality.

> Or one can decree that a work which exhibits the right tendency must, of necessity, show every other quality as well. (21)

Benjamin supported the second formulation.(22) It is insufficient for an artist to rest on the laurels of an ideologically-sound political persuasion: he must also think, and therefore act, at a deeper level than simply producing an art which is politically tendentious; he must, in Benjamin's words, 'reflect upon his position in the production process.' The artist is always by definition and by virtue of education a member of a socially and culturally privileged class. What is required of the committed artist, therefore, is a conscious sense of class-betrayal: as surely as the work of art is a commodity, the artist must attempt to transform from within the apparatus and processes of the social production of art to ends defined by the interests of the proletarian revolution. Commitment for Benjamin - the joint commitment to being a socialist and the producer of great art - goes deeper than mere refusal and making the right-sounding political noises: this amounts only to fighting the bourgeois class, the artist's own class, from within. The socialist artist, beyond this, must actively promote links between the disaffected members of the bourgeoisie and the proletariat - in the words of Louis Aragon, quoted by Benjamin:

> It is not enough to weaken the bourgeoisie from within: it is necessary to fight it together with the proletariat.....(23)

That Surrealism attempted to realise this process is unquestionable: but its success, beyond the force of its rhetorical

proclamations, is definitely open to scrutiny. We can see, without disinterring too may critical skeletons, that Surrealism suffers the fate of what Lukacs refers to as 'formalist modernism': 'when we look at their work in the context of social reality, we see that it never rises above the level of immediacy.'(24) On the one hand this comment merely highlights the battle for the definition of reality that underlies the whole Modernist project, and its doubtful whether the Surrealists would have disputed this point with the ever-hostile Marxist. But it also raises the problem of adapting the Romantic tradition of the autonomy and supremacy of the artistic perception to what are seen as the external demands of politics. In La Position Politique du Surrealisme, Breton echoes similar sentiments:

> Artistic imagination must remain free. It is by definition free from any fidelity to circumstances, especially to the intoxicating circumstances of history. The work of art must remain detached from any kind of practical aim, if it is not to cease to be itself....(25)

This attitude remained axiomatic to the proposed creation of the Surrealist world throughout its course changes from abstract idealism to a tentative conversion to what Breton hailed as the new power of dialectical materialism.

Surrealism's changing ideological inclinations are perhaps gleaned by seeing its own journals (which tended to be longer-lived than Dada papers, and dominated by Breton's editorial influence) - La Révolution Surréaliste(1925-28) became Le Surréalisme au Service de la Révolution (1930-33), and then of central interest was the more specifically fine art journal

Minotaure (1933-38).

In the early 1920s Surrealism was firmly embedded in the ranks of the avant-garde. A declaration published by the Bureau de Recherches Surréalists informs:

> Surrealism is not a new means of expression, or an easier one, nor even a metaphysic of poetry. It is a means of total liberation of the mind and of all that resembles it.

This was the period of total belief in the validity of the Modernist worldview; the summation of the essence of the 'avant-garde myth' where art alone can herald the birth of new social relations. Critical of the crude materialism and the economism informing, as they saw it, the European communist parties, Surrealism countered with a programme offering revolution of the mind and language; a frightening, desperate and absurd personal world which would eventually overthrow the ordered world of bourgeois culture. A revolution that was always a positing of the individual and the personal over and above the external.

But, to cut a large slice of Surrealism's history short (into one sentence from Nadeau to be precise), Breton and his colleagues were forced to face the overwhelmingly hard fact of political life that faces all idealists, however radical: 'the world continued to live as if the surrealists had not existed.' Increasingly aware of the degree of their political impotence, and under fire from 'hard line' members such as Pierre Naville who had always questioned, from a Marxist perspective, the value and powers of an individual revolution of the mind

against society, Breton tentatively led his troop of artists towards some form of assertion of a common interest with more orthodox working-class strategies. Breton, Aragon, Elouard and others linked arms and marched under the Communist banner.

But the inescapable tenet of Romantic artistic theory - the essential autonomy of art's practice to which Breton continually testified - dies hard in the artistic personality. In the attempts to link the artistic imagination with activist politics (which in Communist Party form, stressed the primacy of the economic rather than the metaphysical), Breton could never forget that he was an artist first and a member of the party second. Soon he was simply an artist again. Torn between the conflicting demands of the quasi-sacred nature of art and the role of politica activists, the Surrealists failed to reconcile the two worlds through their essential indecision. They could neither accept a politics where art, the mind and the importance of language were reduced in significance, nor an art that compromised its powers to suit external demands. Even the ostensibly central public demands and interests of the working-class - as the Second Manifesto of the movement succinctly stated:

> The approval of the public must be avoided above all. The public must be forbidden to enter if confusion is to be avoided. I would add that the public must be held exasperated at the door by a system of taunts and provocations. ((26)

For an art thriving, despite its belief in directness of expression and artistic authenticity, on a confusion of the senses and the depiction of the absurd, this is perhaps a strange comment in part. Surrealism was willing, needed to throw the public

into confusion: but it was unwilling for the public to throw their world into confusion. But also the statement's general tone of public antagonism reveals the movement's theoretical debts to Dada. As Walter Benjamin argued in The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction, Dada deliberately and consciously engineered provocative reactions of a qualitatively different kind to those occasioned by more conventional art. From its social, political and artistic position, Dada judged its work according to the central criterion of a new aesthetic category: its 'uselessness for contemplative immersion'.(27) For Benjamin, Dada represented a studied attempt to destroy the 'aura' of the work of art: to dislocate and disintegrate its quality of authenticity to itself and its whole cultural history. This prefigured the radical changes in cultural production and consumption achieved by the perfection of film techniques which similarly, without necessarily or even often provoking consumer outrage, prevents a mode of passive contemplation integral to the production and consumption of traditional art forms. Art became something that wasn't a fixed state and 'dead'; but a process that was consciously alive, 'real' and disinclined to tolerate being ignored by those brave souls who dared to participate:

> From an alluring appearance or persuasive structure of sound the work of art of the Dadaists became an instrument of ballistics. It hit the spectator like a bullet, it happened to him, thus acquiring a tactile quality. (28)

But the problem for, or rather with Dada and Surrealism, was that the numbers permitted to participate in the process was kept to a minimum. Addressing the real problem of the social

role of the artist working with a society immediately and simultaneously repressive and aesthetically ignorant, they stayed, beneath the blustering polemic and lyrical prose, firmly in a private world of art and artists - however rich and infamous many later became. If the criterion of aesthetic judgement employed is simple to formulate - more scandal and outrage, more success - it gets to the contradictory heart of the radical artistic avant-garde. On the one hand there are the facile remarks of Tom Wolfe on the motivations of the Modernist outlook:

> First you do everything possible to make sure your world is antibourgeois, that it defies bourgeois taste, that it mystifies the mob, the public, that it out-distances the insensible middle-class multitudes by light-years of subtlety and intellect - and then, having succeeded admirably, you ask with a sense of See-what-I-mean? outrage: look, they don't even buy our products! (29)

Wolfe's comments, whether or not they misread the market intentions of Dada and Surrealism, nonetheless capture the tendency towards a blinkered vision about the realities of the modern use-value of art that has characterised the history of avant-garde movements. That the bourgeoisie was rightly or wrongly suspicious of art in the nineteenth century is certainly true: that it perceived similar dangers in the art product of post-first world war culture is at least questionable, as it came to realise the true potential of art as, in Robert Hughes' words, 'that innocuous repository on investment value.' The avant-garde world of Dada and Surrealism may have adopted a pose of religious fervour concerning its historical mission -

as indeed Morris, Ruskin, Courbet and others had so done in the previous century - but the art public of critic, patron and consumer failed to share its sentiments. From the viewpoint of the avant-garde consciousness they persistently failed to ask the correct questions of art. As Hughes carries on:

> The history of the avant-garde up to 1930 was suffused with various, ultimately futile calls to revolutionary action and moral renewal, all formed by the belief that painting and sculpture were still the primary, dominant forms of social speech thay had been eighty years before. In uttering them, some of the most brilliant talents of the avant-garde condemned themselves to a permanent self-deception about the limits of their own art. (30)

But as easy as doubting credentials and deriding the pretensions of the Modernist avant-garde in this period undoubtably is, its philosophy remains the logical extension of the original Romantic critique of capitalist social relations, the culture of the Enlightenment, and its attendent forms of artistic expression. As capitalism has revised its cultural and economic organisation, so, at the most general level of accessibility, Modernism was Art's attempt to revise the artistic critique. As capitalism threw up imperialist wars, depressions, general strikes, the ideology across all cultural sphere of the 'mass', and the snowballing cult of technology, so art, to maintain its credentials of cultural relevance, was forced to adapt its forms of refusal. New ways of seeing provoke new ways of seeing: and the artist must always remain one step ahead. Circumstances and ways of expression changed, but the underlying problems the artist was addressing dogmatically persevered. The bohemian refusal remained a pertinent solution.

Although I've consistently argued against the tendency towards constructing bohemianism as some form of homogeneous ideological whole, for those artists who have continued to demand the right to define the artistic practice on their own terms, and the cultural process in aesthetic terms, its broad styles have stayed open to the recruitment of fresh converts. The motifs, the language, the institutional solutions, the romance of the lifestyle - from the nineteenth century's aestheticism and anti-academicism to Dada's art-form of cultural provocation and Surrealism's stress on love and liberty - have remained strong in art's imagination. And they have remained strong in subsequent artistic practice's institutional organisation, tensions and contradictions. Their power is re-asserted in the art colleges and streets and haunts of the late sixties' counter-cultural milieu - even if, as the next chapter will debate, their cultural penetration and force in dominant art styles appears suspended in the years immediately following the second world war.

The next chapter sets up, more directly, the immediate cultural background to the emergence of the counter-culture. It depicts the extension, the 'end' of the Fine Art tradition - a tradition which had embraced all the 'art heroes' seen so far but which, in post-war Britain at least, lost its critical, 'counter' edge. It was left to the 1960s counter-culture to construct its artistic and cultural practices, its cultural critiques and objections, around the 'art heroes' of bohemianism. Verlaine, Rimbaud, Van Gogh; the visual style of the Pre-

Raphaelites and the aesthetic critiques of Ruskin; the practical communities of Morris and the anarchic, spontaneous absurdities of Dada and Surrealism - the hippie counter-culture is redolent with the motifs, the styles, the language and the cultural dreams of Romantic bohemian artistic practice.

Note and References: Chapter Seven.

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3. ibid., p.26
4. Steinberg, Contemporary Art and the Plight of its Public, in Battcock, 1973, p.224
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6. Hughes, The Listener, 1980 (Sept.25)
7. Harvey, 1978, p.70
8. Nochlin, 1971, p.239
9. ibid., p.241
10. Hughes, 1980, p.366
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12. cited in Goldwater and Treves, op.cit., p.435
13. Alexandrian, 1970, p.45
14. Dada Manifesto 1918, in Tzara, 1977, p.10/11
15. cited in Lucie-Smith, 1970, p.30
16. Lucie-Smith, ibid.,p.30
17. Hughes, The Listener, October 23, 1980
18. Nadeau, 1973, p.86
19. Alexandrian, op.cit., p.46
20. Nadeau, op.cit., p.158
21. Benjamin, 1977, p.86
22. My interest in Benjamin is specific. Without seeing the need to become embroiled in further debates about the Marxism of art, I have mentioned Benjamin because of his knowledge of and sympathies for the Dada and Surrealist projects.
23. cited in Benjamin, op.cit., p.102
24. Lukacs, 1977, p.37

25. cited in Alexandrian, op.cit., pp94/5

26. Andre Breton, Second Surrealist Manifesto

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30. Hughes, 1980, p.371

CHAPTER EIGHT

> The big social thrust behind the Factory from 64 through 67 was amphetamine.....
>
> Andy Warhol, POPism, The Warhol '60s.

> There are no objective issues in contemporary culture, and there is no need to take a position. To champion new works because they are new is as orthodox an approach as to attack them for the same reason. There is the question of the creative individual, but on this question advocacy is absurd. What can one do to make individuals creative? One may as well be in favour of genius. Who is against creation? From the Pentagon to the rug industry, everyone is enthusiastic about the creative. Hippies are for creation against everything else. Conservatives who are opposed to hippies see themselves as champions of 'real' creation.
>
> Harold Rosenberg, Discovering the Present.

The structuring theme so far in my exploration of bohemian ideology has been the interplay and tension between the official, established and social face of art, and the essentially opposing demands generated from definitions of artistic practice drawing on the Romantic spirit. But does the bohemian 'solution', as it has been constructed so far, survive as a genuine, viable 'alternative' in the second half of the twentieth century? For although there is in a very real sense an unbroken line of influence and desires from the very earliest Romantic artistic and cultural statements through to the products of the Dada and Surrealist period, it is in no way arguing against the art world's critical consensus to consider the lineage dies in the cultural turmoil and complexities of post-1945 western capitalist societies. Art and the art establishment declared its ideological history irrelevant, outmoded and dead. And search as one may through the ideologies, such as they exist,

of 'official art' of the fifties and sixties there is little trace of the idealism - social or aesthetic - that informed the practice of previous generations. Why and how the past was discarded as art refused history and sold itself out to a pragmatic celebration and consumption of the contemporary will form a main focus of this chapter. Art 'solved' the problems of post-war culture in a certain way: those 'solutions' in turn, as much as the raw conditions of social and cultural experience, became a part of the matrix from which hippie solutions were formed and articulated.

Surrealism, I've stressed, can be located solidly within the stream of conscious Romantic, bohemian ideological refusal. As Hugh Sykes Davies stated in a collection of essays on Surrealism edited by Herbert Read and published soon after the June 1936 International Surrealist Exhibition in London:

> ....Surrealism follows the nineteenth century. It is rooted in opposition to the capitalist system on all fronts, in its oppression and brutalisation of men as workers, and in its subjection of them as lovers to that lowest of all prostitutions, bourgeois marriage....(1)

Explicitly and categorically, Surrealism is defended not as 'a limp offshoot' of Romanticism, but as 'a vigorous continuation'. And again, Herbert Read, in his introduction to the collection, echoes the Romantic ideologues of the nineteenth century when he states:

> There is a principle of life, of creation, of liberation, and that is the romantic spirit; there is a principle of order, of control and of repression, and that is the classical spirit.(2)

Perhaps Read's terminology was, by the late 1930s, curiously

archaic, but the position was clear: Romanticism was the spirit of human development, and Surrealism, intoxicated by the power of the Hegelian dialectic, was the highest material form of that spirit's earthly development. Paradoxically, one of the Romantic themes appropriated and developed by Surrealism - the emphasis on the activity of the artist rather than the medium - was to contribute, as Surrealism's legacy, to the breakdown of the Romantic personality in the art of the fifties and sixties.

The stress on 'activity' as the end of art peaks with the work of the alcoholic, manic-depressive American painter Jackson Pollock and his compatriot and contemporary De Kooning. 'Action' becomes the key sign in early post-war American aesthetics, and 'Action Painting', a term coined by the critic Harold Rosenberg, becomes the art-world conversation piece of the time. But what it signifies here, in this chronicle of counter-cultural ideologies, is the final death throes of Romanticism. Certainly it is difficult to reconcile the presented product of Abstract Expressionism with the images of the more obvious Romantic artists I've covered; but in the ideological and practical senses of artistic expression, Pollock and De Kooning link arms with the others - they are still concerned with creativity, and in their recognition of the history of artistic practice maintain both a belief in the premises of the Modernist project and a concern that art should represent an alternative, possibly superior way of making sense of the cultural world. Rosenberg himself depicts some of these concerns:

Thus Abstract Expressionism recognised a limited

> debt to Surrealist spontaneity, to the improvisations of Kandinsky, to the brushwork of Manet, to the calligraphy of Zen monks and thrown-ink Sumi paintings; in a word, it rediscovered the part of manual gesture in painting, and, assenting with fervour to the conviction of Cezanne and the Symbolists that art is a means of revelation and self-discovery, it enthroned ambiguity and the significance of the sketch, the blank area and the unfinished work. (3)

Although the finer points of Abstract Expressionism need not detain us, the significance of its inclusion is that it stands on the transitional edge between an art aware, whatever its offered resolutions, of the tensions and contradictions between its own practice and its social context, and an art markedly less keen to probe too deeply below the surface of cultural appearance. Whereas Dada and Surrealism had vocally and openly seen their respective artistic practices as dialectical, (and similar tensions and concerns can be seen in early post-war American painting), by the mid-1950s the innovatory core of the visual arts had polarised around the mechanical reflection and celebration of the culture of affluence (Pop Art), and the opposing tendency towards forms of non-reflexive idealism (minimalism, 'flat' painting etc.). The former category - and Pop Art is the most apt example, if for no other reason than its actual popular accessibility and recognition in the late '50s and the 1960s - is certainly aware of culture but lacks any of the questioning idealism associated with Romantic ideology; the latter's 'idealism' should perhaps more accurately be labelled Conceptualism, as artistic ideas and concepts run riot.

Conceptualism, despite the attractions of comparing its development with certain forms of social science(4), can

henceforth be ignored. It never rose to the levels of popular recognition and debate outside the official art world enjoyed by Pop Art (who, today, remembers with affection Morris Louis, Ellsworth Kelly or Kenneth Noland, as the names of Warhol, Hamilton and Lichtenstein are indelibly printed on the cultural history of the past 25 years). And Minimalism, Conceptualism or Post-Painterly Abstraction as it was otherwise known, clutched more than its fair share of rambling, concept-intoxicated old soaks to its breast for comfort.

Pop Art, besides, far more adequately marks the death of Romanticism and the bohemian personality in art in its capture of, in particular, the American and British imagination. (By the late '50s the centre of the art world had shifted westwards to New York, the new focus of innovation, with perhaps London second and Paris a struggling third) But before I examine the questions Pop Art addressed - and which it reconciled rather than 'refused' - I will offer some reflections on the material, cultural context of the profession of Fine Artist.

It's been a theme of my review of bohemian ideology that the sense of 'questioning' and refusal arises at least in part from the cultural spaces and existential insecurity engendered by capitalist artistic 'freedom'. And, as Peter Fuller states of the artistic position in the post-war years:

> It is only a mild exaggeration to say that now no one wants Fine Artists, except Fine Artists, and that neither they nor anyone else have the slightest idea what they should be doing, or for whom they should be doing it. (5)

As I've maintained, this insecurity is far from new, and far from being a product of post-1940s society. But its extension

and depth has causes and corollaries that, if again not strictly 'new', are at least accelerated.

For the British Fine Artist there has been the problem of recognition: a problem that allowed John Berger to state with customary self-confidence in 1972 that 'Francis Bacon is the only British painter this century to have had international influence.'(6) It seems that nobody wanted British Fine Artists at least.

And beyond the limits of national boundaries, it started to dawn on artists they were no longer really culturally and socially important: they knew that the nature of their social position - what was expected of them and what, moreover, was prohibited - had changed since the nineteenth century, and that their ideas and material practice were no longer central to the wider organisation of making sense of the social world. And they in turn, when they reflected on the composition of society that sponsored them, could see that the old 'causes' structuring earlier bohemian responses had either died or no longer seemed vital and relevant. And with these attitudes coming together in the fifties and sixties, Modernism became the 'official art' of the galleries and the market; sponsored, promoted, and celebrated by Foundations, Trusts and quangos. So much so that leading American art critic and polemicist, Rosenberg, could state in 1964:

> The entire social basis of art is being transformed - to all appearances for the better. Instead of being, as it used to be, an acivity of rebellion, despair or self-indulgence on the fringe of society, art is being normalised as a professional activity within society. For the first time, the art formerly called vanguard

> has been accepted en masse and its ideals of innovation, experiment, dissent have been institutionalised and made official. (7)

There was, then, a way that existential insecurity could be turned into profit and fame. But dissent? The art world then, as now, seemed composed of rather wet young men, and probably equally wet but much less conspicuous young women, who realised that art was no more 'a haven for self-defeating contemplatives,' as Harold Rosenberg carries on, 'but a glamorous arena in which performers of talent may rival the celebrity of senators or TV stars.' If the original intentions of the avant-garde were 'provoke and repel', they had been translated into strategies of 'provoke and be fashionable, rich and famous'. And as the official avant-garde of the 1950s and '60s denies the history of its ideological inclinations, it also denied its more formal artistic history. For although we may now remember the 1960s in particular as the decade of clear artistic 'movements', most artists' declarations and statements at exhibitions and in publications during this period denied ideological allegiance to any such movement, style or reference point. Whereas in popular music it became fashionable, even obligatory for musicians to declare debts of influence - 'yeah man, I was really moved by Bob Dylan at an early age' (Do they refer to their bowels?) - the visual arts was content to throw off the weight of dead labour power that seemed to threaten the authenticity of claims of innovation. Art, in short, had come to deny its own dialectical history.

To again focus the problematical cultural location of the

post-war Fine Artist, I will return to Peter Fuller's colourful prose:

> ....it became more and more apparent that the subsidised Fine Art professionals were becoming like Red Indians herded into a reservation. Their state hand-outs meant that they could not die a decent death, nor were they likely to drift off and take up some other activity in the world beyond the art world corral. (8)

One alternative activity open to disenchanted and disenfranchised Fine Artists, an area where it was still possible to argue that the ideas of art could influence the ideas and practice of the wider culture, was advertising and commercial art.

But in a real sense, it was the increasingly apparent revelation that the one true link between art and culture was in the former's commercial assimilation into the latter, together with the strengthening of rival forms of visual imagery to traditional artistic media that was posing, or thought to be posing the real threat to the once sacred definitions of artistic practice. Opinion among commentators, however, remains divided. Gaston Diehl, for example, states:

> Far from being its dangerous rivals, photography, the cinema, illustrated magazines and newspapers and television aid it by taking over its secondary and adventitious functions.
> Their successive interventions precipitated its evolution and put the seal on its autonomy. They moved it, in fact, to take less and less from reality; they forced it to an interior gain in depth, to a reconsideration of what was specific in it, to an extension of its field of action in all sectors and materials within its grasp. (9)

In opposition to this position - which should be clearly identifiable as a defence of the drift towards conceptualism - is the outraged concern of Peter Fuller, who sees the autonomy

claimed by Diehl as spurious, nailing the lid on the Fine Art coffin:

> ....the ubiquitous mega-visual tradition became ever more swollen. Professional Fine Artists were thus marginalised and rendered impotent: they seemed to have been stripped of an area of experience appropriate to their practice, of their visual means, and of their social function alike. The imagery of the unconscious, dreams, and fantasy seemed the last territory Fine Artists could claim as their own - hence the Surrealist episode. After that, they were bereft of both subject and content for their work, and the tradition became progressively more kenotic, or self-emptying. Soon after the Second World War, modernist Fine Art in France declined and fell; in Britain it barely survived, despite Government subsidy. (10)

Fuller clearly has his own, contentious Fine Art axe to grind. But returning to Surrealism, mentioned by Fuller above as the last great escape of the Fine Art tradition, we can indeed see the lasting impact of its visual ideas in the High Streets of most British cities in the form of messages to consume Benson and Hedges cigarettes washed down with a sip of Guinness from a glass maquerading as a gasometer. The doubtful pleasures of discovering the deeper levels of the psyche, the mystery and promise of psychoanalysis that underlay much Modernist, particularly Surrealist artistic idealism, has been gleefully appropriated wholesale by the advertising industry. As Vance Packard says, in the 'Shock, Horror, Probe' blockbusting exposure of the advertising world:

> Professional persuaders have seized upon it in their groping for more effective ways to sell us their wares - whether products, ideas, attitudes, candidates, goals, or states of mind. (11)

In this context, one of the key words of the 1950s for those

in the know, and one always much loved by commentators who experienced difficulty explaining why their collective noses should be on the front of their face and not in the middle of their arse, was 'subliminal'. And the '50s was certainly a decade of key words and catchphrases.

But in the world of contemporary art's ideas and strategies, conceptualism and minimalism were leading to a dead end of insularity, while the emergent Pop Art form, mindful of the arguments surrounding Fine Art's cultural status, was entering a curious relationship with the culture of affluence and consensus. Further reflections on the state of post-war British culture will be offered later when I consider the penetrating strength of American cultural imagery; here I will pursue the link between the Affluent Society, the rise of Pop Art and the death of the Romantic artistic critique.

The depression and mass unemployment of the 1930s was followed by six years of war during which full employment was gained at obvious expense. The war, in turn, was followed by a short and not particularly happy period of social idealism, as the Conservative Party was rejected for a Labour Party that seemed more in tune with the spirit of the times. Until 1951 when, after a period of austerity during which most of the British people were in many ways worse off materially than during the war, Churchill was returned as Prime Minister. And in the same year the Festival of Britain opened to celebrate an undisclosed 'something' that escaped the deeper thoughts if not the attentions of the eight million visitors. And although the 'good life' was at least a further three years away, as Peter Lewis argues a further major shift in British

cultural sensibilities was being anticipated:

> All the public-spirited, though rather dull, values the Festival stood for were going to be swamped in a growing tide of individualism and self-enrichment that gathered to its crescendo in the Macmillan years. (12)

With the benefit of 20/20 hindsight, it's now clear that Britain's 'miracle' in the '50s was established on less than firm economic foundations. And as legions of subsequent sociologists have informed, the realities of social wealth and political power remained largely unaffected. But the prevailing ideologies of capitalism held a certain ring of truth, when the belief of the times was that the material lot of (British) mankind had changed; just as it was assumed in economics that the old doctrines, designed around now hardly defensible problems of scarcity, were outdated, so it was readily and convincingly argued that the old social philosophies, articulated around problems of class and poverty, were equally redundant. Not least of the 'old ideologies' to suffer at the gentle and caressing hands of the Affluent Society was Marxism.

For the ideology of the age was 'the end of ideology': the belief that the inequalities and injustices of the capitalism of old were in their death throes if not yet actually expired. At a superficial level analysis of argument at least the arguments were convincing, even demonstrably true provided the surface of the Affluent Society was not scratched too deeply. Income and wealth were seen to be more evenly spread throughout the population; there had been a significant growth in the 'middle sector' of skills and rewards (exemplified for

Affluent Society ideologues by the blossoming white-collar occupations); power was no longer thought to be concentrated in the hands of the few, but to be diffused throughout the plurality of contemporary institutions. And of course those unlucky enough to have been passed by had the safety net of the much-lauded Welfare State to fall back on. Capitalism was 'delivering the goods' it had long promised, and in the expectation of which the sacrifices of the post-war years had been made.

Whether the fifties and sixties were a period of affluence accompanied by new and tangible freedoms, or of unprecedented national decline, a mixture of both or something entirely different may be arguable. But what is historical fact is that the responsibility for this social condition was held by one political party, with the Conservative reigning supreme, if with increasing unease, from 1951 until 1964. And in the contemporary consciousness this responsibility was further narrowed to rest on the ample, aristocratic, though visibly sagging shoulders of Harold Macmillan. Becoming Prime Minister after the resignation of the sad and inadequate Eden following the Suez fiasco, Macmillan was the Messiah of affluence, glorying in praise and caricature alike. Sufficiently secure in his position as world statesman and domestic miracle worker, 'Supermac', as he came ambiguously to be known, uttered the infamous words:

> Indeed let us be frank about it: most of our people have never had it so good. Go round the country, go to the industrial towns, go to the farms and you will see a state of prosperity such as we have never had in my

> lifetime - nor indeed ever in the history of this country. (13)

To the dismay of the Left; the hatred of the modern equivalents of the Aesthetes who bewailed the mediocrity of the culture of affluence; and the petulance of the Angry Young Men, Macmillan was in many ways correct.

But what came to grate increasingly on the nerves of those less committed to the intertwined destinies of the Conservative Party and the Affluent Society was the bare-faced cynicism of the Tory aristocracy: the quality described by Anthony Sampson in his biography of Macmillan as 'the implied patrician contempt for "them", and the absence of any hint of idealism.'(14) Although the Britain beyond the confines of the Conservative Party was hardly riding a wave of social and political idealism itself, in that the quality existed its target was the party that continued to claim the honours for the state of contemporary culture. The rise of romantic, youthful protest provided home-grown symbols of cultural disaffection that brightened the staid culture of affluence; and, as we shall see later, such symbols focused elements of early counter-cultural ideology at a time when the trajectory of Romantic bohemianism described so far was at its lowest ebb. CND and satire were not directly the products of an aesthetic consciousness, nor were they attempts to define an alternative culture in aesthetic terms - but their ranks included, just as their style attracted and entertained, people who saw themselves as crazy artists, neo-Dadaists, and bohemian missionaries.

If satire can be said to have been launched institutionally,

it was in 1961 qith the first appearance, on a small scale, of the magazine Private Eye, under the collective supervision of self-proclaimed 'Tory anarchist' Richard Ingrams, journalist Christopher Booker and William Rushton. Although hardly 'artistic', nor bohemian in the sense developed here, the magazine was delightfully 'counter': it attacked everybody and everything that could conceivably be linked to the Establishment. As journalist James Cameron comments:

> To avoid the perils of being fashionable the magazine felt obliged to be increasingly outrageous, up to the point of being really downright offensive. Writ-servers beat a path to their door. For a while the 'Eye' employed a legal eagle to check its copy for libel, but shortly the poor man was driven to insist that everything was libellous, so his services seemed a waste of time. (15)

Commenting on the nature of the magazine's purpose and appeal, andperhaps reminding us in passing of the heyday of Wilde's forays into an earlier culture of respectability, Christopher Booker modestly claims it was:

> ....to bring back into English life a strain of public insult and personal vilification which, although foreshadowed in the late fifties by such things as Bernard Levin's Taper column and some of Peter Sellers' sketches, it had not known for many years. (16)

Equally scathing but less libellous, Private Eye's message was popularised amongst a larger audience than the less-well-adjusted members of London's intellectual population by the television programme That Was The Week That Was (TW3). And if, as legend dictates, the Quatermass science fiction series of the fifties managed to terminate the parliamentary debates

of an enthralled House of Commons with unprecedented rapidity, TW3 enjoyed the distinction of provoking questions in the chamber on a satisfyingly regular basis.

But whatever the satire boom was a deeper symptom of, at one level it was certainly an expression of the mood towards a political reinstatement of the Labour Party which, as David Widgery comments, 'when pitched against the incompetent nonchalance of the Tories, Wilson's urgency and enthusiasm for efficiency and science had a hopeful side.'(17)

Yet before the Wilson triumph in 1964 could end the 'thirteen years of Tory misrule', the party of, by the late '50s, seemingly natural opposition had its own hurdles to negotiate. 'Great was the fury,' Bernard Levin wrote, 'of the Labour Party at seeing their clothes so blatantly stolen , their philosophy having for so many years been one of alleviating the lot of the poor.' And as we've seen the ideology of the Affluent Society demanded that the poor no longer existed, and it was the Tories who had seemingly pulled off the miracle. Despite the natural tendency to bitterness and spite, even the Labour Party's leading 'intellectual', Tony Crosland, announced triumphantly at the height of the boom, 'Capitalism has been reformed almost out of recognition.'

But although the party could legitimately lay claim to a share of whatever glory was on offer - for who had introduced the Welfare State, and enforced the years of austerity which had laid the foundations for the boom - it was becoming increasingly dispirited as the long years of opposition wore on, peaking in the period of soul-searching following the

devastating 1959 election loss. As Henry Pelling notes, it was a time of intense, and in some ways unprecedented self-reflection:

> Was the Labour Party with its 'class' basis and its close ties with the unions, obsolete in the new Britain?....Gaitskell himself, speaking at the brief conference of the party held a few weeks after the election, narrowed the issue to the demand for a revision of the party's objects, as laid down in the constitution. He urged the abandonment of the existing Clause Four, with its demands for 'the common ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange.'(18)

A radical change from the idealism and hopes being expressed so emphatically just a decade earlier. But then this was the time of such pressing questions as 'Must Labour Lose?' Were they a party forever fighting out-dated battles, exhorting out-dated ideologies in a period which had left them far behind? All too familiar questions. And in 1960 the party's problems were compounded by its less than happy entanglement with the 'new cause' of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament.

The Parliamentary Labour Party had a low-key tradition of flirtation with policies of nuclear disarmament. In 1952 Bevan had led an amorphous group in revolt against the official party line on armaments, and again in 1955 the passionate Welshman had challenged the decision to manufacture the H Bomb. But it was CND, launched in february 1958, which was to become the vanguard in the battle against modern warfare trends. The first march, from Trafalgar Square to the weapons research establishment at Aldermaston - as was soon realised, the wrong direction for maximum support - took place during the Easter weekend of the same year.

> Those who marched were a coalition of wildly different elements: pacifists and Christians, Trade Unionists and Little Englanders, anarchists and rationalists, Beats and ravers, the barefoot and the long-haired and also a great many quiet and concerned young parents pushing prams or carrying infants on their shoulders. (19)

The significance of elements of this composition will be returned to later. Here we can note that the following Easter the pilgrimage, now wisely reversed in its direction, attracted fifty thousand devotees, led by such figures as Bertrand Russell, Michael Foot, and an assortment of the less conventional clergy. And by 1960 the serried ranks had swollen to little short of 100,000.

If the internal politics of the movement were far from smooth - the 'militant' posture of the Committee of 100 splitting the likes of Vanessa Redgrave, John Braine, John Osborne and Lindsay Anderson away from the more staid clergy and liberals - its relationship with the Lablour Party tended towards the acrimonious and was at best ambiguous. The classic about-turn - which should serve as a warning to the bright young optimists of the '80s CND revival - followed from developments at the Labour Party annual conference at Scarborough in 1960. An amalgam of CND sympathisers, more traditionally-minded pacifists, and the increasing number of delegates antagonistic towards Gaitskell's watered-down brand of socialism, narrowly succeeded in defeating the party's draft, pro-nuclear defence proposals - only for the decision to be reversed the following year in the more proletarian setting of Blackpool, thanks largely to the recently formed and singularly misnamed 'Campaign for Democratic Socialism'. The Establishment, that

spectre of loosely-defined forces first identified by name by Henry Fairlie, had won again.

The Left was not surprised. It had long ago grown hoarse shouting 'sham' and 'charlatans' to the ideologues of the Affluent Society and the end of ideology. They knew that in the period from 1951-56 20% of the population still maintained a firm grip on 89% of personal net capital. They knew that the class society was still around under the surface of consumerism and the 'we're all middle-class now' appearance of British culture. Their problem was that the fifties and early sixties seemed to be an example of political theory and cultural experience being wildly divergent.

The 'new left' of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies and, one would suppose, of the airwaves of the Open University, has made theoretical mileage out of the ability of cultural symbols and signs to rise in resistance above the morass of a deadening society to restructure and rearticulate the cultural experience of the young. The 'old' New Left of the fifties held no such illusions. Their analysis was far from optimistic.

There were the theorists of incorporation: the belief that the working-class had historically become so enmeshed in the pattern of bourgeois values that its aspirations and actions were consequently sealed and defined by this ideological flow. In their pessimism, in assessing the 'docility', 'conscious subordination' and 'passivity' of the contemporary British working-class, they appeared on sound empirical and theoretical ground. There was the demonstrable historical

failure of the organised labour movements to break the bounds of social democratic propriety; full employment and relative affluence had appeared to extinguish the fires of working-class passion; the union leaders were gratefully and economistically accepting their new integrated roles in the process of government. In short, modern society was characterised by a one-way - downwards - ideological flow, and there could be little chance, as Perry Anderson argued, for the masses to emerge on the right side of the ideological boundaries:

> A hegemonic class seeks to transform society in its own image, inventing afresh its economic system, its political institutions, its cultural values, its whole 'mode of insertion' into the world. A corporate class seeks to defend and improve its own position within a social order accepted as given. (20)

As Marcuse argued for America, there were not the spaces within British culture for the organisation of a socialist ideology along traditional Marxist lines. What 'joined' people was no longer an organic collectivism in the face of massive material deprivation and blatant exploitation, but a warring factionalism - disguised by 'consensus', 'embourgeoisement' and 'affluence' - around the various styles of consumption. But as Peter Sedgewick states, while the more specific objectives of the New Left failed to capture the imagination of many outside its own ranks, 'its cultural analysis of capitalism and the mass media were much more widely acceptable.' They were not alone: CND, satire, the Angry Young Men, ageing rapidly, were in their somewhere, as was Richard Hoggart - two quotations from whom will lead back into art.

> Most mass-entertainments are in the end what D.H.Lawrence described as 'anti-life'. They are full of corrupt brightness, of improper appeals and moral evasions. (21)

Strong stuff. And it is to be expected that the consumption of these barbaric products - and their consumption appears as one cultural certainty of the Affluent Society - will have dire effects upon the hallowed consciousness of the working-class. And although Hoggart is certainly no hard-line Marxist in the Anderson and Nairn mould, he does not disappoint:

> A handful of such productions reaches daily the great majority of the population: their effect is both widespread and uniform....The result is high degree of passive acceptance, an acceptance often only apparent and often qualified at present, but which is a ground for more serious extensions. (22)

For Hoggart, then, there was a new, 'classless' culture emerging, infinitely 'less healthy' than the old, organically composed culture he dubiously attributes to the working-class of the past. Contemporary culture is dominated by the saturation and negation of the valuable by the worthless. In the spirit of J.B.Priestly, it is the age of Admass, the term coined to denote an economic, social and cultural system dominated by the desire to consume driven on by a manipulative system of advertising. Hoggart, without offering any discernible solutions, assumes the mantle of the Romantic striving to save the authenticity and autonomy of the creative experience from the evils of an all-providing capitalism that buys off the working-class at the cost of its essential properties of life. Hoggart's criticisms will surface again later, in his pleas against the pervasive crudity of American cultural style.

But where are the objections of the visual artists who, on past evidence, could have been expected to carry the Romantic banner against the antagonisms Hoggart describes and decries? In other periods of capitalist cultural history, whether the socialist intellectuals had bewailed the passivity of the working-class or eagerly anticipated the final revolutionary moment, sections of contemporary artistic practice reliably offered some form of cultural critique, a refusal of the dominant ways of seeing and making sense of the world. In the culture of post-war affluence one searches long and hard and in vain to discover a parallel coherent and committed response. Artists, it seems, were as beguiled as everyone else by the charms of the consumer society.

One strand of the Romantic, bohemian spirit, with roots in Morris and Ruskin, had seen that art can have a more direct and unmediated function in making life 'better' by concentrating on the more pragmatic concerns of architecture. As Robert Hughes notes:

> One can live quite well (in a material sense) without painting, music, or cinema, but the life of the roofless is nasty, brutish and wet.(23)

And some of the material practice of this spirit will be touched on in the following chapter.

But the reasons <u>why</u> the visual arts withdrew into their own world, casting off the inhibitions of idealism and the old Romantic ideologies, can only be explained through their continuing location in the material and institutional framework I've developed in the preceding chapters: artists may have rejected Romanticism, but they still faced the problems

that had provoked and maintained the Romantic, bohemian refusal. And again, these factors will be examined in the next chapter.

But the actual response of art to its continuing 'problem situation' is well illustrated by the rise of Pop Art, and one way into the Pop Art 'solution' is a recollection of the artist Claes Oldenburg:

> In 1952 I declared that I was going to be an artist, but this seemed at the time a disguise. It gave me greater freedom than declaring I would be a newspaper man. In a way, a newspaper man is more what I really am. (24)

In the popular imagination the newspaper man is a reporter of factual news. 'Good news' or, more likely, bad, facets of the reportage will require critical comment. But the 'facts' of the news must always be, and be seen to be objective - outside of the capricious influence or political persuasion of the reporter. Oldenburg is ascribing such an ideology of factual impartiality to post-war art; and Pop Art, cognisant of Oldenburg's comments or not, follows implicitly. It adopts a stance of uncritical and playful celebration of the 'facts' of the culture of the Affluent Society.

As Hughes states in the introductory remarks to the chapter Culture as Nature in his excellent critical work The Shock of the New, our perceptions of nature, and the ways we expect nature to be depicted in art are of a radically different kind to those our ancestors one hundred years ago experienced. Culture and the cultural experience is never static and, naturally, Ruskin, Morris, the Pre-Raphaelites etc. viewed and depicted Nature through culture-tinted glasses. But the point is that the modern cultural experience is more complex

in its mediations, more pressing in its urgency, and less likely to render the 'natural experience' which nineteenth century painters claimed as their own unique, visionary moment. The uncontrolled drive to innovate, modernise and create a constant array of new sensations has been the western cultural experience of the post-war years. Despised or celebrated, and jumping, according to Left belief, from one crisis into the next, capitalism has raised the cult of cultural modernity into something approaching an art form. As Hughes states:

> The idea that we would live immersed in a haze of almost undifferentiated images, that the social functions of this image-maze would be to erode distinction rather than multiply the possible discriminations about reality, would have been unthinkable to our great-grandparents - let alone to our remote ancestors. (25)

What changes in the post-war cultural perceptions of artists is that the ideas of mass-culture and mass-society that underlay the despair of the Dadaists and the Surrealists, and continued to trouble the consciences of other critics I've mentioned, emerge now as a celebration. Both Surrealism and Pop Art use junk, use the trivia of expanding consumerism, but the ideologies underlying this use are far removed.

British Pop Art came of age from within the closed circle of the Independent Group in the winter of 1952/3 at the Institute of Contemporary Arts in London. Richard Hamilton, Eduardo Paolozzi, and Reyner Banham were instrumental in its development. Its critical guru was Lawrence Alloway:

> The area of contact was mass-produced urban

> culture: movies, advertising, science fiction, Pop music. We felt none of the dislike of commercial culture standard among most intellectuals, but accepted it as a fact, discussed it in detail, and consumed it enthusiastically. One result of our discussions was to take Pop culture out of the realm of 'escapism', 'sheer entertainment', 'relaxation', and to treat it with the seriousness of art. (26)

The only artist he knew to make anything approaching an open political statement on canvas was Richard Hamilton, the others, pondering the 'working-class bias' of Hoggart and the Angry Young Men, 'considered these positions old-fashioned and held in bad faith'. There was no room for angst, shame or protest in the Pop Art ideology. In a list referred to by Robert Hughes as the 'desiderata of Pop Art', Richard Hamilton argued in 1957 that the form should be:

> Popular (designed for a mass audience)
> Transient (short-term solution)
> Expendable (easily forgotten)
> Low-cost
> Mass-produced
> Young (aimed at youth)
> Witty
> Sexy
> Gimmicky
> Glamorous
> Big Business.... (27)

Some of these criteria Pop Art met - it was certainly gimmicky, glamorous and 'Big Business' - but its aspirations to transience, expendability and cost-effectiveness may have been more problematical. Moreover, when we consider the always ambiguous meaning of 'popular', lest anyone should be deceived into considering Pop Art as some form of democratising, levelling process within the discourse and practice of art - for example an ideology that everyone was, or at least could be an artist as Morris and Ruskin had dreamed and whose idealised aesthetic

allowed space for such propositions - Hughes puts us right: 'It was done to the people.'

So although images such as Hamilton's own celebrated multi-media collage Just What Is It That Make's Today's Homes So Different, So Appealing?, first exhibited at the Whitechapel Gallery in 1956 under the auspices of the ICA, may have been mildly provocative in an aesthetic sense, where is the committed cultural questioning? Nobody, certainly by the mid-1950s could have realistically expected the visual arts to pursue a determined course of stripping away the powerful assumptions and illusions of the Affluent Society, but where is the old bohemian spirit of refusal of conventions and ways of seeing? The one strand of Romantic ideology that remains - which owes its continuation in Pop Art to the influence of the American Robert Rauschenberg rather than to the history of European culture - is the power of the artist to define according to whim the most apparently un-artistic object as, in fact, ART. And when studied in the light of a comment by Rauschenberg, even this quality appears shallow and empty of Romantic idealism. Which was precisely what it was meant to be.

> It has never bothered me a bit when people say that what I'm doing is not art. I don't think of myself as making art. I do what I do because I want to, because painting is the best way I've found to get along with myself. (28)

The professional Fine Artist solved his emotional and existential crises by denying art's validity as anything other than a medium standing alone: perhaps the apotheosis of art's posture of selfish individualism. By the mid-1960s the only

meaning of art was that it was located within the eager confines of the gallery - institutions certainly not blameless in the de-Romanticising art process in the 1960s.(29) Artists were not attempting to do or say anything: they were content to be artists.

The artist who personified this 'ideal', who realised that the media-artist could be the true media star an so made publicity intrinsic to his work, was Andy Warhol. Part of the contemporary stable including American Pop Artists Lichtenstein, Oldenburg and Rosenquist, Warhol followed Rauschenberg and Jasper John's out of Leo Castelli's New York gallery enterprise - Castelli's promotions from the late-'50s onwards did much to establish what Wolfe identified as 'The New Art Gallery Society' - and was immediately and rather optimistically hailed as the pioneer of a 'revolutionary' aesthetic. Although dismissed, by one critic, as a maladjusted 'sometime commercial artist' whose artistic production verged on the criminal(30), Warhol successfully (he made a lot of money from it) parodied both the political and cultural pretensions of the ageing avant-garde and the social and cultural institutions it had once fought passionately to expose and undermine. For Warhol Culture is Advertising, Advertising creates Fashion, and his aim was the completion of the process that made the innovatory ideologies of the artistic avant-garde a part of the High Fashion discourse. Comparing Warhol to Marshall McLuhan, the American critic Gregory Battcock pays the Pop Artist this rather back-handed compliment: he 'correctly foresaw the end of painting and became its executioner.'(31)

Up to and including the art of Surrealism, and just including a few cultural hangovers into post-war art practice, the general hold of the Romantic spirit joined with the bohemian stance of cultural refusal and disaffection to offer, at various historical moments and in various ways, a style of artistic and personal relationships that were objectively within the confines of capitalist market and cultural relations yet which, albeit in an idealised form, sought the act of escape. From the original philosophers of Romanticism, via the instances of bohemian refusal in Courbet, the Impressionists, Morris, Ruskin, the Dadaists and the others, and through to Surrealism, the institutional realities of a capitalist culture, and the bourgeois personality that organised and patronised its artistic instances were always - for political or aesthetic reasons - despised and rejected. The point of Pop Art, most certainly the dominant visual art form and imagery of the late 1950s and '60s, is that refusal yields to a grateful embrace of both the cultural institutions of capitalism and the conventional routes to media and financial success they offer the willing artist. From an ideology which questioned contemporary cultural and artistic perceptions according, at least, to a need to modernise and radicalise artistic practice, the innovatory experience of bohemianism and its aesthetic and political convictions reduces to the words of Peter Fuller:

> The London art community is very like a gymnasium. Every time you enter into a discourse with your colleagues you first have to take a look around and see what posture everyone is adopting today. (32)

The reasons why the institutional framework of post-war art

generated such a stagnant ideological arrangement, and the reasons leading up to why there was a necessary reaction within the art schools in the late 1960s in Britain will be examined in the next chapter. From these causes one face of the bohemian counter-culture was provoked and moulded.

Notes and References: Chapter Eight.

1. Davies, Surrealism at this Time and Place, in Read, 1936, p.166

2. Read, 1936, p.26

3. Rosenberg, 1964, p.238

4. The parallels between the Minimalist development in art and the structuralist/rationalist discourse in social philosophy are pressing: both worship at the temple of the concept; both agree, in their respective muddled ways, that Culture=Ideology and that the human subject, in all senses, is therefore an ideological construction (with the logical consequence in the visual arts that artistic creativity is one of the few invalid concepts); both show increasingly little concern with political practice (and for minimalism this also means increasingly little concern with the historically defined material practices of art in relation to the canvas, the stone, or the metal.)

5. Fuller, 1980, p.45

6. Berger, 1977, p.66

7. Rosenberg, op.cit. p.13

8. Fuller, op.cit., p.61

9. Diehl, 1975, p.22

10. Fuller, op.cit., p.72

11. Packard, 1962, p.11

12. Lewis, 1978, p.14

13. cited in Sampson, 1967, p.158

14. Sampson, ibid., p.166

15. Cameron, Sunday Telegraph, 18.2.1979

16. Booker, 1969, p.165

17. Widgery, 1976, p.200

18. Pelling, 1976, pp.120/1

19. Lewis, op.cit., p.99

20. Anderson, NLR 23, p.39

21. Hoggart, 1958, p.340

22. ibid., pp. 340/1

23. Hughes, 1980, p.164

24. cited in Woods, Thompson & Williams (eds), 1972, p.23

25. Hughes, op.cit., p.325

26. cited in Lippard, 1966, p.27

27. cited in Hughes, op.cit., p.344

28. cited in Woods et al. op.cit., p.168

29. see, for example, Lawrence Alloway, Art Monthly, feb.1982

> Commercial galleries retard public recognition of the diversity of contemporary art, but they do not damage the semantic potential of the works in which they deal. The bad effect comes specifically from the galleries' uncontested dominance of the network of information and their restrictions on taste, not from buying and selling as such.

30. Fuller, op.cit. pp.19/20

31. Battcock, 1973, p.21

32. Fuller, op.cit., p.44

CHAPTER NINE

> We must get back to basics. What is an art school training for? What is needed by the students? It must be remembered that in our society it is not possible for any student, after his training, to actually earn a reasonable living solely by practising one of the Fine Arts.
>
> William Johnstone, former Principal, Central School of Arts and Crafts.

> What has happened in England since 1945 is, I suggest, that the artists of this lively, highly original, alternative tradition - born of non-conformism but also reacting against it - provincials who have come to town - have taken over and created styles of living as well as of art which have triumphed over the pomposities of the public-school-university classical tradition. I do not mean to suggest that artists like David Hockney and Richard Hamilton are mystics like Blake. What I mean is that the English originality of which Blake provided the greatest example, has proved to be irrepressible. I think that this rebirth of an anti-puritan tradition in England is a great compensation for the loss of empire.
>
> Stephen Spender, Introduction to David Hockney, Paintings and Drawings.

In the previous two chapters, I've been more or less exclusively concerned with the development of certain ideologies within the twentieth century Fine Art tradition. I traced a path which commenced in the concern for continuous and radical experimentation, led through the politicisation of the artistic subject and practice, and ended in the death of Romanticism in the 'dominant', certainly the characteristic movements of Fine Art in the 1950s and '60s. Arguably, this history, the points made and the conclusions drawn makes sense as it stands of the death of Romanticism. This demise is succinctly summarised by an

extract from Andy Warhol's recollections of the '60s:

> To be successful as an artist, you have to have your work shown in a good gallery for the same reason that, say, Dior never sold his originals from a counter in Woolworth's. It's a matter of marketing, among other things. (1)

People who search for political idealism in the art of the Affluent Society, and in Warhol's parodies in particular, would be well advised to read POPism, the Warhol '60s.

But my primary concern is with the rebirth of Romantic ideologies of art's cultural place and purpose, the reappearance of a spirit of bohemian counter-cultural refusal and redefinition in sections of the British art education system. This, I would argue, is one significant part of the attempt to redefine the cultural experience aesthetically which leads directly out of the institutional organisation of modern artistic practice. My analysis, therefore, again leaves the realm of general ideological problems and returns to the specific institutional base of modern art's organisation which has carried opposing definitions of artistic practice. Back, in other words, to the historical development of the British art school, and back to a more detailed appraisal of the student experience of the problems of artistic production under capitalism. This will introduce my excursion, in the next chapter, into the world of the Hornsey College revolt in 1968. From being a setting of, as we've seen, mechanical purpose and ideological discipline, in the nineteenth century organisation of artistic training, the art school of the late 1960s had become an institution more than ready to embrace the idea, and the tensions, of

youth and expressive, cultural opportunity being intertwined. In terms of ideologies of work, leisure, time and style, the art school was the natural location for the attempted practical realisation of this claimed unity. But first I must dig more deeply into the institutional history of art education.

I left the nineteenth century with the massed ranks of European artists decrying, in isolation or gathered into movements, the basic philosophies and principles around which the academies and schools of art were constructed. The stimulus, or more accurately the focus for the bulk of the dialogue was the problematical relationship between the practice of art and the organisation and demands of industrial production. I left the century at the point where some form of synthesis or reconciliation was being attempted. The Fine Art aestheticism of the PRB had been the ideological training ground for Morris and his disciples; who in turn, through their more profound concern for the quality of social life and social production, had reconstructed the aesthetic in terms of pure and applied design. In the process they formed the context for the Arts and Crafts experiment in general and the radical innovation in art education ideology represented by London's Central School of Arts and Crafts in particular. And in terms of the continuing saga of ideologies informing the art dialectic, the passions and concerns of the Arts and Crafts movement, particularly those of Morris' company, redefined for a time the acceptable face of artistic practice. As Pevsner states, 'Morris, Marshall and Faulkner meant the end for the contempt

for the "Arts Not-Fine" which had undermined European art for such a long time.'(2)

For once, while acknowledging the significance of the earlier German Nazarene movement in the whole trend towards blending aestheticism and practical utility and service, a major development in the theory and philosophy of artistic practice had originated in Britain. But was this genuine innovation or merely a long overdue attempt to make the aesthetic dimension of production fit the demands of the technological dimension? Britain was still the 'workshop of the world' and, of course, had pioneered the techniques of mass industrial production. But for a greater part of the nineteenth century its capitalist class had envied the demonstrable aesthetic and creative superiority of its continental competition. Hence the continuing concern, articulated through the central government, to create a viable system for the training of skilled, and in varying ways creative designers to feed the appetite and innovatory powers of industrial production.

But in terms of the question above, the parties attendent to the problem of the art and design/industrial production link were indecisive about the value of the Arts and Crafts contribution. And it is certainly a realitic comment to state that once the highpoint of Morrisite idealism in British art education had been reached with the foundation of the Central School, the initiative largely vanished. The school, of course, remained. And the Morris company continued to produce for a limited market for a number of years. But the finer distinguishing points of the Arts and Crafts exercise - the

qualities that ensured William Morris' place in Romanticism's expansive Hall of Fame - never realised their expected potential in the British context.

On the one hand this is certainly accounted for by the continuing divorce and antagonism between British industrial capitalism, the education system, and the higher aesthetic and social ideals of a blend of Romantic ideologies. That everybody should be taught to draw and paint, and thus go some way to realising their creative potential may have been fundamental to the Arts and Crafts ideology: but phrased in those terms it could only be an expensive frippery to the more pragmatically minded captains of British industry. Particularly when the latter insisted the concrete pursuit of profit rather than the vague dream of creativity was the lychpin of social existence and progress.

But in a further sense, both parties attendent to the stagnation of a tradition must share the blame. Certainly, nobody could ever accuse the industries forming the productive spine of Britain in the late nineteenth, early twentieth centuries of being distinguished by a heightened aesthetic consciousness; but, equally, neither could the disciples of Morris, hide-bound by their Gothic craft ideals, be congratulated for their perceptions of the social realities of a modern system of production and distribution. The Arts and Crafts movement, a developed expression of the 'social arm' of the Romantic questioning of capitalist society which had grown more immediately from Ruskin and the fierce, almost puritan proselytising of the 1850s, now appears as little more than a quaint style of flowing designs papering the cracks

in half-baked social theories. The writers of history have never favoured losers, and the Romanticism and romanticism of Arts and Crafts, with its hatred of machine-ethic and mass production techniques of industrial capitalism, has provoked more than a few pages of occasionally symptathetic, always knowing references. The historical success story, the paradigm of this mix of aestheticism, craft, use-value and social idealism is more usually seen in the work of the Bauhaus. British industry, it seems, could afford to ignore the more pleasurable concerns of Arts and Crafts. But German industry, and German design, was willing to construct some form of compromise from the impasse of the British experience. Pevsner explains:

> In Germany, industry proved more responsive to the new ideas. It first adapted Art Nouveau, and thereby spoiled it. But then the artists themselves discovered - the most essntial step which raised Germany beyond the stage reached by England - that only accepting the machine and designing in accordance with its properties could a universal style, as opposed to a mere fashion amongst the rich, be created. (3)

What distinguished ideologically the concerns of the Bauhaus from those of Morris and British Arts and Crafts (to which the German experiment was certainly indebted), was a more positive and exploratory approach to the attempted realisation of social visions. The problems of art, its social use-value, were resolved and culturally symbolised in different ways.

Far from purging the machine from Utopia in a fit of puritanical zeal, the artists, designers and architects of the Bauhaus, under the vigilant eyes of Gropius, conducted a functional dialogue with contemporary technology with a view to constructing a better, certainly more harmonious future.

As an example, although the teaching system of the Bauhaus contained certain curious paradoxes - revealing his debt to both Arts and Crafts and the Nazarenes, Gropius instituted a combination of contemporary art school teaching practice and the one-to-one, master-apprentice relationship of the medieval crafts workshop - what immediately strikes the attention is the sheer academic and social 'modernism', the pragmatic blending of technique, vision and economy, of the whole affair. Gropius wanted to actively translate the aesthetic visions of Ruskin and Morris into realistic social practices: to achieve this, he believed, there could be no general sanctuary in the false promises, the traps and illusions of a historically doubtful, primitive-communal past. On the contrary, all artistic energies and powers should be harnessed to creating a future constructed around the functional, rational and liberating properties of the machine.

At least this was the ideal. The Bauhaus appeared to symbolise for Design all the concerns of Modernism that Cubism, the Fauves, the Futurists, Cézanne etc, had struggled through in the name of Fine Art. Formed by Gropius through the merging of two art schools at Weimar in 1919, the Bauhaus stands firmly in the tradition of European Modernist experimentation. But in that the Bauhaus theory of Design, beyond pioneering work in what would now be called High Tech furniture, is more readily remembered in the field of architecture - Gropius standing alongside Adolf Loos and Le Corbusier - more detailed discussion of its practical workings and ideas would be outside the declared scope of this present work.

But in a history of bohemian ideology which places the

historical varieties of Romantic refusal against the realities and ideologies of the capitalist social world, its relevance can be briefly noted as twofold. Firstly, as has been noted above, the Bauhaus's short career continued the ideas of Ruskin and Morris; and if the larger social visions are not realised, until its close in 1933 it nonetheless attempted a reworking of the definition of Design and a redefinition of design training. Secondly, and not too dissimilar from the first point when the philosophies of Ruskin and Morris are recalled, Gropius stands squarely in the tradition of Schiller and the original prophets of the spirit of Romanticism. Despite the rhetoric of rationality and the ideologically suspect celebration of the machine age, what persists is the insistence that the only personality capable of correctly fusing together all elements of the Modernist utopia is the artist. The artist remains the supreme seer; the man of vision who can see possibilities and visualise situations beyond the mundane capabilties of other men.

This ideological emphasis, in this specific manifestation, has concurrent character traits that Robert Hughes savagely parodies. He states that although Walter Gropius may have been initially under the spell of Marx and Morris, his developed thought offered a stance in which his 'form of Communism was Expressionist, not Marxist, and the idea of art as a quasi-religious activity dominated the Bauhaus.' And he continues, 'in its Weimar years, the Bauhaus was host to every sort of Romantic nitwit, Tolstoyan Wandervögel, and fringe prophet...'(4)

But even allowing the funny and probably accurate reservations of Hughes' review, the Bauhaus was the first art school

to institutionalise and make central to its way of working certain elements of the Romantic ideology of art. It also provoked some questioning by the worthy citizens of Weimar of the nature of a 'Modernist' design education: perhaps asking, in Hughes' formulation of the reaction, 'how could two distinguished art schools have merged to produce an introverted commune of people in smocks, washing one another's feet and hacking designs on baulks of oak with home-made adzes?'(5) A facet of the Bauhaus character that defenders of its position in the vanguard of the Modernist experiment would no doubt prefer to forget.

The Bauhaus flag was waved in Britain by Herbert Read, although his emphasis differed from that of Gropius by shifting the focus of good design away from architecture towards the more fluid concerns of abstract art.. Read believed that the Arts and Crafts aesthetic surviving in the Bauhaus was mistaken in its belief that 'good design' practice was capable of making the prosaic objects of everyday life artistic: the input is reversed, and the essential quality of the good designer is his ability to create according to the examples and formal methods of abstract art. And in this sense, Read was as committed in the fight against 'functionalism' in design as the most elevated theories of more decorative days. As he stated in a powerful 'textbook' of British design of the inter-war years, Art and Industry:

> That functional efficiency and beauty do often coincide may be admitted: we have already had the example of the motor car. The mistake is to assume that the functional efficiency is the cause of the beauty; because functional, therefore beautiful. (6)

That the relationship between functional utility and beauty

should proceed according to more complex principles than 'because functional, therefore beautiful' probably appeared as transparently obvious to all beyond the beleaguered design studios of British industry. As I've noted, Arts and Crafts was anathema to British capitalist industry - the former's expense, concentration on handcrafted manufacture, and its nineteenth century sentimentality could guarantee corporate palpitations - but where were the alternative sources of inspiration for the constant search for ways to improve industrial design? Where, in other words, were the attempts parallelling the Bauhaus' efforts at resolving the seemingly eternal problems of art and design's social use and status?

The first British course of state action, naturally, was to found an investigatory body; a committee to examine afresh this problematical link between good healthy design and good healthy profit. Curiously enough, given that the Design and Industries Association was formed in 1915, the model was Germany, as it had briefly been eighty years previously. In the Deutscher Werkbund for example, the British team of investigators, having witnessed in this country long years of fragmentation and hostility to the most commonplace machine techniques at the hands of the Arts and Crafts guilds, could see a unity of purpose and organisation conspicuously lacking in the British arrangement of design. Advising the Association from its inception was William Letharby, formerly the first Principal of the Central School of Arts and Crafts but by 1915 a Professor at the Royal College of Art.

The choice of Letharby, whose association with the Central

defined his aesthetic sense as at least sympathetic towards the ideas of Morris, was not as contradictory as first appears. Letharby's ideas were certainly far from anatagonistic to the honest and simple virtues of design and labour that guided Morris; but they were more attuned to the realities of competitive industrial design. He recognised that commercial realism dictated a system of art education geared less towards aesthetic appreciation and more to an empathy with active methods of production. The problem for Letharby was that the 'good design'/ 'profitable production' equation was unlikely to be equitably resolved if the practice of his own institution, the RCA, was any yardstick. In a recent letter to Art Monthly, William Johnstone, Prncipal of the Central School from 1947-60, recalls that in pre-Second World War London:

> the most important training centres for art students were the Slade School of Art, which catered for those students who envisaged a career as practititioners of the Fine Arts without being necessarily dependant on earning a living by their efforts; the Central School of Arts and Crafts, which the London County Council had founded for the training of practical studio craftsmen; and the Royal College of Art, whose function was considered to be that of training students in the Fine Arts (and related techniques) who were intending to take up teaching as a career. (7)

The problem for ideologues advocating design's debts to industry, and for the government in particular, trying to reconcile the competing interests and ideologies, was the Royal College's drift towards a position as a Fine Arts establishment. Although its reputation as the nation's leading design school had been seized by the Central, the RCA was still the first national art

school of Britain, both historically and in the contemporary consciousness. If we remember the RCA's origins in the 1830s as the head institution of the government schools of design system, we also remember it grew from concerns, of how to train capable industrial designers, similar to those being expressed in the first half of the twentieth century by institutions like the Design and Industries Association. This is not surprising; nor is it surprising, given the contentious, troubled biography of the College, that it should be the focus of questioning and dissatisfaction with the response of design education to stated industrial need. Even in the briefest summary, the RCA's first hundred years of existence characterises the confusions and contradictions surrounding the practice of art and design training: in its earliest guise unequivocably geared to design, it subsequently deviated towards a Fine Art orientation, to be brought back to a recognition of its social responsibilities under the control of the Morrisite Walter Crane, only to deviate once again to Fine Art. The government, perceptive in criticism if not always in construction, recognised that an institution happily producing Fine Art teachers could not be pulling its weight in the cauldron of international competition in which British designers and producers were thought to be struggling. Nevertheless, under the control of Sir William Rothenstein from 1920 to 1935, Fine Art remained the dominant activity for the College's students.

And criticism of the College again surfaced in 1936 with the publication of the Hambledon Report (Report of the Committee on Advanced Art Education in London). Clive Ashwin summarises

the terms of reference of the Committee:

> The Committee concerned itself with institutions 'whose work reaches in whole or in part what may be called University standard', namely the Royal College of Art, the Slade School of Fine Art, the Royal Academy Schools, the Courtauld Institute of Art and the Central School of Arts and Crafts.... The greater part of the Report is devoted to the Royal College of Art, its functioning, strengths and deficiencies, and its future. (8)

Practice rather than the teaching of art should be the ideal path for the College, the Report stated, and it accused the institution because of the lack of communication between itself and industry, of 'a certain lack of realism in the training provided for students of design'. Not daring to throw too many stones at the Fine Art studio windows, the Report nonetheless expressed the strong feeling that 'the Fine Arts should not again be allowed to divert the College from its primary function.'

But beyond the confines of its critique of the Royal College of Art, the Report also reminded readers that other training institutions existed in London. The Central School, committed to cultivating a particular model of design practitioner, and the RCA, formally committed to design but historically hedging its bets, were faced, most obviously, by the Slade and the oldest of the ensemble, the Royal Academy Schools. In the mixture of ideologies surrounding these institutions, the debates about teaching art, and art's deeper and wider cultural purpose, lies the foundation of a significant part of the modern, contemporary experience of artistic practice: the sense of marginality, the indecision of purpose and aspiration, and the feelings of ideological tension between different 'explanations of culture and art. To the Royal Academy first.

Unfortunately, considering the strength and ferocity of the disputes centred on the Royal Academy in the past, by the twentieth century the institution had become increasingly marginal as the training, practice, distribution and consumption of art became ever more sophisticated. The Annual Exhibition, now less central to the pulse of British art innovation than it had once been, and becoming increasingly a forum for 'hopefuls' from outside the art establishment to peddle often undistinguished wares, rarely provoked controversy, and only occasionally brought forth resignations from within the still exclusive ranks of the membership. Its orthodox exhibitions of special interest subjects broke new ground in entrance numbers if not in artistic innovation (the 1930 exhibition, Italian Art, 1200-1900, attracted around 600,000 visitors.)

Perhaps the only artists sufficiently concerned to offer a form of criticism against the workings of the maiden aunt of British art education were those centred in and around the Bloomsbury area of London. This mixed bag of characters - including such diverse talents as Virginia Woolf, Lytton Strachey and Keynes - also numbered amongst its ranks Fine Artists like Vanessa Bell, who had experienced Royal Academy teaching first-hand, and Roger Fry, who had been largely responsible for broadening the taste of the British art viewing public with his two Post-Impressionist exhibitions in 1910 and 1912. Socially, these personalities could emulate former bohemian glories by retracing the Café Royal footsteps of Wilde. Artistically, there were the alternatives offered by the flourishing selection of smaller art clubs - the New English

Art Club, the Allied Artists Association, more 'to the left' of the New English and founded 'along the lines of the Salon des Indépendents', the Camden Town Group and a variety of other formations. For these artists, there was:

> little space for any discussion of subject-matter, social usage, or the conditions of cultural production and distribution. Art was regarded as a trans-historical essence, constantly restoring itself to a condition of pristine Edenic purity, against the power and will of the hopelessly Philistine masses.(9)

As cultural conscience to the 'philistine masses', the Royal Academy appeared a bastion of solid English virtues in the midst of innovations and revolutions within art at home and abroad, and remained impervious to the criticisms of an ungrateful few safely privileged in the established bohemian haunts of Fitzroy Square and Gower Street. But it could not totally ignore the more widely expressed demands for the social accountability of art; and it certainly could not pass lightly over the comments of Prince George, later the Duke of Kent, who, in 1932, in the words of the Academy's former librarian Sidney C.Hutchinson:

> spoke at some length on the possibilities of improving the attractiveness of British manufactured goods. 'Between artists and manufacturers,' he said, 'there has been in the past, perhaps, some lack of mutual understanding and an absence of co-operation. (10)

Ruling class and Establishment apologists, from whatever quarter, are never happier than when they're reducing the contradictions and complexities of social and ideological conflict to 'problems of communication.' But if this line of reasoning rarely fools enlightened sociologists, it often convinces those institutions

unwilling to confront the realities of social change. Accordingly, the Royal Academy, in conjunction with the Royal Society of Arts, organised in 1935 an exhibition imaginatively titled Art in Industry.

Despite this occurrence, important as it may have been in provoking future developments like the war-time founding of the Council of Industrial Design (later the more familiarly titled Design Council), the Academy, certainly in its teaching activities, navigated a circular route around the more pressing contemporary issues. In his chapter Uncertain Peace, dealing with the Academy's history between the wars, Hutchinson offers one brief paragraph of the development of the Schools, commendable for the succinct phrasing of its concluding sentence: 'The period was notable for the integration of various studies and the family atmosphere in the schools.'(11)

The Slade, on the other hand, was not suffering from the atrophy and growing irrelevance of the Royal Academy in all its guises and functions. Set in the heart of London's self-proclaimed intellectual milieu, the Slade, from its inception in 1871, had attempted to pursue a teaching policy of a more innovatory variety than the other Fine Art or design schools in the country. Laudable as this enterprise was and remains, its actual possibility was enhanced by the Slade's fortuitous material and existential position. Because of its envied financial independence from the state; because it could attract renowned and celebrated Fine Artists as teaching staff; and because it was part of University College (and therefore, presumably, subscribed to the pioneering spirit of most university

ideologies - then if not now), the Slade never suffered from the sort of constraints that limited the state schools of art controlled by the Cole system. What this position meant was not in any sense a sponsoring of radical/free/experimental drawing - the innovations of Modernist techniques could come later for young students - but it did mean, first under the headship of Alphonse Legros and then Tonks, that the mechanical and dreary draughting methods which had stifled creative talent for generations of aspiring British artists were discarded in favour of methods more in line with the Fine Art studios of Europe. From this base, and with a continuing emphasis on the virtues of a sound and sober training in drawing technique, the Slade has pursued a teaching policy founded on 'intelligent drawing' far removed from the 'slavish outlining, plumbing and measuring' of the state system of design education.

Perhaps 'intelligence' is not synonymous with 'creativity', particularly in the complex world of the artistic personality; but as Macdonald notes, the methods of the Slade were a shot in the institutional arm of British art training, and were long-lasting in their wider influence:

> ....because of the high quality of life drawing produced at the school, the Slade system became universal in British Schools of Art from the nineteen twenties and ex-students were much sought after to take charge of life-classes.(12)

Set in the heart of Bloomsbury, but far-removed from the gaiety and hedonism of 'the set', the Slade was founded upon a work ethic that was always 'serious, scholarly and dedicated': not concerned with the prosaic world of industrial design, but neither concerned with the aesthetic frivolities of a stylised

and ideologically questioning bohemia. When placed in the historical context of the continuing crisis of Fine Art practice the Slade's ideology could possibly be described as a form of Art for Art's Sake - but its career-oriented pragmatism, certainly in its early years, removed it from the world of the Café Royal.

But to whatever extent the Slade managed to blend ideologies of artistic practice, its importance was and is as a Fine Art institution rather than as a training centre for enhancing design. By the start of this century the ideological split between the demands of Fine Art and commercial design, whatever state rhetoric to the opposite may have said, was to all intents and purposes complete. The aspiring art student, whether contemplating the Slade, the RCA or a provincial college, was faced then, as now, with a choice between the implicitly 'art for art's sake' world of the Fine Arts or the pragmatism and vocational orientation of the variety of design courses. Between, in other words, an ideology which saw the study of art as an end in itself and one which could only locate such a pursuit as part of a wider, and of course socially 'deeper' and more significant project. The preceding chapters of the second section of this thesis have suggested that this dichotomy as now expressed is basic to the whole organisation of artistic practice under capitalism: every student entering the art education system confronts the 'existential choice' between competing definitions of art's use, purpose and pleasures. The fuller implications of this situation will be investigated in the next two chapters - here I would note that the problem

was exacerbated, the choice complicated however it was phrased by the increasingly apparent thought that the attempted realisation of both competing ideologies built into the art education system - Romanticism (the centrality of a defiant, questioning art to cultural expression) and social pragmatism (the centrality of art and design to responsible, 'useful', wider social practices) - was creating a true 'artistic proletariat' as supply of trained professionals greatly outstripped possible demand. Particularly, and acutely, in the case of Fine Artists.

In the sense of attempting to construct a career as a Fine Artist, Peter Fuller's comments noted in the last chapter remain distinct, even unresolvable problems. And when placed alongside the Romantic assertion that art can only be a valid cultural statement if it actively resists adulteration by external demands, the history of 'professional' Fine Art and artistic practice under a system of capitalist social relations becomes a truly schizophrenia-inducing experience for those involved: a form of social madness rooted deep in the institutional organisation of modern art. When Paul Gaugin painted the Tahitian canvas Where do we Come from? What are we? Where are we going?, he could apply the questions to himself; to a large number of Fine Artists preceding him; and to the vast majority of those who would subsequently don the Fine Art mantle.

Before moving on to the ways in which the student experience of the Fine Art dilemma provoked a resurgence of strident Romantic, bohemian refusal in the late 1960s, I must complete my institutional history of art education, moving into the more immediate, more significant background of post-war developments.

In an earlier chapter I noted briefly the vague, but undoubtably popular symbolic appeal of the Festival of Britain. On one level it was an anti-depressant, a metaphorical gesture determined to demonstrate that austerity was a passing phase in the life of a country which, for most of its population, could detect little discernible material difference between the expected deprivations of war and the more surprising shortages of a victorious peace. But coming exactly one hundred years after the Great Exhibition of 1851, it also intended, as Peter Lewis notes 'to demonstrate British achievement in arts, sciences and design.'(13) British achievement in the first and last of these categories may have been suspect in the light of my preceding argument, but to the crowds clad in the drab colours and styles of austerity and demobilisation the South Bank offered innocent pleasures and startling images of celebration in the futuristic shapes of the Skylon - an apparently self-supporting, attenuated Castella - and the self-confidently named Dome of Discovery. It also offered, to a public starved of the 'joys' of the best in British artistic innovation, a landscape of Modernism, in the form of works by the great contemporary names of sculpture, Fine Art and design. Again quoting Lewis:

> The design team under Hugh Casson and Misha Black (both later knighted) were right in believing that there was a hunger for visual stimulation among the British and they got it in the form of sculpture, murals and mobiles by Moore, Hepworth, Piper, Sutherland, Topolski and Epstein as well as a pedestrian precinct which was all grilles and screens and balls and decks and terraces and fountains and colour. (14)

Who would have dared to be a kill joy and state that the British were also hungry for the commodities and simple pleasures of life still on strict ration?

But what, in the world of design, was there to celebrate? As I've attempted to show in the last few chapters, the government had expended a considerable amount of nervous energy and money since the early decades of the nineteenth century attempting to raise the philosophy and practice of British design, particularly industrial design, above the aesthetic poverty line they at least thought it determined to cling to. Now, it seemed, that with the spending spree of a post-austerity affluence approaching, the consciousness of 'good taste' in design and production had to be sold and promoted at a more popular level. With an underlying, firm belief in the law that nothing succeeds like a toothless giant parrot, the post-war years saw a rash of government initiatives in the field of art and design: all predicated upon the conviction that anything the gifted, visionary creator could do, he or she could do better prompted by a bureaucratic institution.

I've already noted briefly that the Council of Industrial Design sprung into a war-time existence following the continued debates in the inter-war years about the relationship between academic training in the arts and design and the finished product issuing from the industrial production line. This august body was to remain intact until 1967 with its rebirth as the more economically named Design Council. But overshadowing this provision for the enhancement of the national aesthetic and profit sensibility was the establishment of the

Arts Council, founded in 1946 to succeed the sparklingly named war-time Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts. Its function, according to the terms of its founding Royal Charter, was to promote:

> a greater knowledge, understanding and practice of the fine arts exclusively and in particular to increase the accessibility of the fine arts to the public throughout Our Realm, to improve the standard of the execution of the fine arts and to advise and co-operate with Our Government Departments, local authorities and other bodies on any matters concerned directly or indirectly with those objects. (15)

A concern with 'the fine arts exclusively'? Thrown into a world with ostensibly more pressing concerns than artistic indulgence, and one which was governed by an economic ideology that saw cultural expenditure as frivolous and 'made philistinism appear patriotic', the Arts Council has battled against the considerable odds of finacial deprivation and occasional public ridicule to educate, sponsor and refresh what was consciously seen as a drab cultural inheritance. But despite a largely realistic and justified 'backs to the wall' spirit, the Arts Council has not fought its battles alone against the eclectic vagaries of public artistic consciousness. A 1975 document, The Promotion of the Arts in Britain(16), lists the other institutions, ranging in diversity from the British Council to charitable trusts and foundations, which the state perceives as potential (non-profit making) forces for artistic innovation. The battle of the gallery and the dealer against the philistine is, of course, a different story altogether.

But perhaps the Arts Council remains the central institution of state patronage: it certainly focuses the opposing

ideological forces pulling at public consumption, state intervention and the actual practice of producing works of art. Free of any overt concern for adapting artistic practice to the needs of capitalist production by their declared sole concentration on the fine arts, such institutions as the Arts Council demonstrate the contemporary state's recognition of the artist's 'inalienable freedom' to pursue projects without and instantly recognisable social use-value. Sponsorship without censorship or control appears an admirable ideology. As enshrined in a 1965 statement of government policy towards the arts:

> The relationship between artist and state in a modern democratic community is not easily defined. No one would wish state patronage to dictate taste or in any way restrict the liberty of even the most unorthodox and experimental of artists. (17)

The consuming art public, for its part, has not always shared such a laissez-faire attitude towards the productions of some recent 'unorthodox and experimental' artists. But artists, on the other hand, should surely applaud and welcome such an enlightened recognition of their freedom - the freedom, ostensibly, from any form of external constraint - long demanded by Romantic philosophy in all its political and aesthetic forms. As Peter Fuller states, the Arts Council imposed few rules of conduct on beneficiaries of sponsorship and grants: it

> ....committed itself to the exhibition and subsidy of the professional Fine Arts tradition alone; it commissioned nothing and imposed no constraints on artists of any kind. According to the Council, professional Fine Artists were supposed to be 'free' in an absolute, unconditional sense.(18)

But given the existence of this 'freedom', certain problems of practice and production continue to underly the condition of the Fine Artist under capitalism: what to produce; with what, if any, ideological motivation and colour; and with these two factors in mind, for whom. In the post-war years they became more acute. And the way these problems were expressed and 'solved' in Fine Art - the tradition in which the concerns of Romanticism have been most concentrated - is through a loss of idealism, a loss of the few remaining links with the values and stresses of popular culture, and a dedicated push into the safe preserve of a High Culture discourse. The odd controversy aside, Fine Artists knew that artistic practice was no longer central to the formation of more general cultural sensibilities, so why romanticise, and claim or attempt to retrieve the unobtainable? This was the foundation of the Pop Art aesthetic.

Because of the ways the history of art appreciation works, the viewing public, again with the odd controversy aside, remained and remains committed in general to the works of artists from a less cynical past who felt they could romanticise, challenge and disprove. Modernism, the avant-garde and all the varied experiments of the previous century and a half were certainly now traditions, windows into a past age. But in terms of artistic relevance, they were 'dead': firmly institutionalised, sentimentalised and the subject of a flourishing industry in critical commentaries and a run-away art market - possessing, in short, all the qualities that earlier would have provoked a fierce critique by a rising

generation of Fine Art idealists. Now they were 'safe', no longer seen as threatening in their power because the very fabric of the Romantic, bohemian style had given way to a resigned acceptance and passive reflection of contemporary culture, or to totally introverted variations on a conceptual theme that lacked the aesthetic, provocative and 'counter' dimensions of earlier Art for Art's Sake forms. The truly provocative role within the visual arts, which few people doubted could truly mould cultural (and market) sensibilities, was taken on by a commercial design practice feeding an insatiable advertising and marketing industry.

But if commercial design and advertising art had willingly assumed the creative pioneering spirit of earlier generations of Fine Artists, the Fine Art professionals of the 1950s and '60s were far from assuming the qualities of purpose and direction claimed by the commercial design industry. Niches were carved, and reputations made: but not all the legions of qualified and hopeful Fine Artists issuing from the art schools could be accomodated within Pop Art, Conceptualism or any of the other post-war styles and movements. There is space for only so many celebrated artists at any moment in a system of production and consumption that relies, directly or indirectly, on forms of state patronage, and directly on market sale.

The practitioners of the 'applied arts' of architecture and design could shelter behind the protective and promotional shields of exclusive professional bodies. Only qualified people, registered with the Architect's Registration Council of the United Kingdom can legitimately practice under the title 'Architect'. Similarly, members of the Society of

Industrial Artists and Designers are bound by a strict code of professional conduct which unequivocally delineates the designer's responsibilities to client, fellow practitioners and society. Fine Artists, of course, have the Royal Academy, but this has continued to push the definition of exclusivity to new limits of public irrelevance (an after dinner party game: name more than one member of the RA). The problem of Fine Art's marginality is captured, at this stage, in an AGCAS information sheet Opportunities for Graduates in Fine Art:

> One problem initially facing artists is that of getting known. Usually it is difficult to get exhibitions until one is known in the region but it is not possible to be known unless work has been exhibited.

Those who clear the first hurdle on the academic path to success in Fine Art - in other words those who graduate from the lesser climes of the regional art schools to the rarified atmosphere of the post-graduate courses - are in some senses sheltered from the immediate impact of exposure to the disrespectful forces of the capitalist art market. As David Hockney recounts about the rather threatening aura of the major institutions when mentioning his applications to the Royal College and the Slade on graduating from Bradford School of Art in 1957:

> Anybody who'd studied painting in art school in those days would then apply either to the Royal College or the Slade or the Royal Academy, which were post-graduate schools; what one learned at art school wasn't sufficient. (19)

The change in assumptions and philosophies confronting the

student from the provicial art schools entering the major London institutions then must have been considerable: and certainly, particularly in the case of the Royal College of Art, must indeed have provoked a questioning of the sufficiency and relevance of earlier years of training. As Hockney says of Bradford, 'they liked Sickert; Sickert was the great god and the whole style of painting in that art school - and in every other art school in England - was a cross between Sickert and the Euston Road School'.

The Royal College, on the other hand, was instituting a fresh ideology of industrial design. From the appointment of Robin Darwin as Principal, and continuing through his long reign, the college committed itself as a school of art directly geared to industrial, and increasingly directly sponsored and contracted design. As Darwin himself recalls:

> Of the academic changes, much the most important was my decision to pursue a policy of rigid specialisation in all fields of design, to discard responsibility towards the teaching profession and to provide courses of a thoroughly professional nature in all primary industrial design fields.(20)

That this complacency has given way in more recent times to a questioning of the College's practical ability to fulfill its stated founding principles - in the form of the scourge of British higher education, Dr. Rhodes Boyson(21) - should not detract from Darwin's achievements in moulding the College's structure in the 1950s and '60s to one of a successful business enterprise, attracting direct commercial commissions and gaining a large percentage of its income from industrial 'programmes of research'. Commenting on the steady increase

in the College's size since 1949, the 1960 DES Report attributes the rise in student numbers directly to 'increased opportunities for students to make a career in commerce and industry.' (In marked contrast, Christopher Cornford notes in his potted history of significant developments with the art education system, that the wealth of talent in the Fine Art departments enjoyed a freer, uncomplicated system for pursuing their research and post-graduate study: 'It took graduates from the NDD or Vocational Courses, and in effect said to them: "Here are studios, materials, advice if required. You have three years' grant to support you. Go ahead and develop your talents, be someone!"'(22))

Of the other London institutions already mentioned - the Slade, the Central, and the Royal Academy - little need be said. The Central, as an undergraduate-equivalent school, falls into the institutional category to be covered soon. The Slade, having discovered and established its pattern, stuck to it. Its view of Fine Art training remained unadulterated, even parochial in its insistence on the values of drawing from life and the antique. For its teachers, 'modern art ended with Cézanne and the other Post-Impressionists and it was unwise to emulate even these giants who had been dead some forty years.'(23)

The Royal Academy, of course, was immutable. In reminiscences by the Academy's former librarian, the finely-tuned grasp of social reality expected of the institution is shown in the remarks of the President between 1954 and 1956, the architect Sir Albert Edward Richardson:

....with such epithets as 'bungalitis' for the

> bungalows and semi-detached houses of suburbia and 'breeding boxes' for the later developments of multi-storeyed blocks of flats. He looked upon the majority of modern buildings as little more than 'maggotries full of pale and squirming people.(24)

The Schools of Design remained select, with a total student body consistently around 100 for the Schools Diploma in Fine Art and the Schools Certificate combined.

By the 1950s, then, the philosophies of the major art education institutions were quite sharply polarised around the demands of a belief in an autonomous, if marginal Fine Art practice, and a modern, progressive push to feed the culturally-relevant aspects of the visual arts. Fine Art students and teachers may have despaired of their chosen discipline's cultural marginality but they surely appreciated its relative autonomy from the vagaries of external, social, usually antagonistic demands and pressures. In the lower levels of the art education hierarchy, however, the situation was more turbulent: calls for major reorganisation were being made as important initiatives in the philosophy and practice of the teaching experience were being thrust forward. Moves that were initially to affect the huge majority of aspiring art students below the exalted levels of the nationally known colleges, but which came, ultimately, to raise questions of the broadest nature across the art educational spectrum. One of the most controversial and far-reaching innovations to affect the student experience from the late 1950s was the introduction of the Basic Design philosophy. Another was the radical restructuring initiated by the Coldstream Commission established in 1959.

The significance of the development of Basic Design is

threefold. Firstly, its influence on the structuring of art education in Britain, across all its levels, was never less than major. As a 1971 DES document, Art in Schools, summarises historically:

> The basic design courses which have become part of the training of the majority of the art students have considerably affected the work in many secondary schools. At their best they lead to more analytical objective study and a more planned approach to the development of visual education. (25)

Secondly, although not disconnected, the Basic Design ideology of art training, as it came to influence the art colleges themselves, was to signal, as it certainly intended, the breakdown of traditional tuition practices. Finding a certain 'natural' institutional setting in the one-year pre-diploma courses demanded by the Coldstream Commission, to which I will turn soon, it marked a rethink of basic philosophies of art education.

But lastly, and perhaps most significantly, Basic Design's assimilation into the atmosphere of the art schools marked the shift from a general ambience of Romantic conceptions of art towards the more sterile attitude that, we saw, was already consolidating its position in the marketable and celebrated world of 'High' Fine Art. The first level of connection was the 'known' Fine Artists who were also practising teachers of the Basic Design philosophy in the 1950s.

Just as Richard Hamilton was a founding father of the British Pop Art movement, so he was instrumental in the development of the Basic Design programme for restructuring the teaching of fundamental perceptual and conceptual skills in

the art schools. Alongside Victor Pasmore, Harry Thubron, Alan Davie, Tom Hudson and other active designers and artists, the programme grew from the critical milieu centred on the ICA in the early and mid '50s, as well as from the work of many of those artists alongside Eduardo Paolozzi at the Central School of Arts and Crafts, where a sense of abstraction and a concern for basic structural form was pushed into the design departments.

The prevailing atmosphere of the art schools was seen by these artists as one of a stultifying devotion to manifestly anachronistic practices: to the over-emphasis on frequent examinations to test progress; to the rigidity of learning from the life model and the still life; to a general fear of contact with 'modern art' - all presided over by reactionary and disinterested teachers. David Thistlewood summarises what was, and what was to become - a crucial transition in the development of art education philosophy and central to the structuring of the art school student experience that engendered a rebirth of a wider sense of questioning in the late 1960s:

> What prevailed was a system devoted to conformity, to a misconceived sense of belonging to a classical tradition, to a belief that art was essentially technical skill. What now exists is a general devotion to the principle of individual creative development....There is no compromise between these two states; and so it is appropriate to describe the succession as 'revolutionary'.(26)

Although no unified philosophy of practical concerns is readily distinguishable in the above, certain common traits underly the formulation of the teaching programmes. There is a common stress on the individual student's capability to discover his

own aptitudes and 'test the relevance of his own ideas.' This is a common emphasis in which the traditional methods and mannerisms of formal art teaching are sacrificed in favour of the encouragement of a basic analytical power. This meant as, David Thistlewood explains: 'in such an environment art might accrue incidentally. And the notion "Art Education" should be replaced by "Creative Education"....'

Secondly, whether approached from Hudson's philosophy of concentrating on the otherwise inhibited value of sorting natural and cultural stimuli in new ways, or through Hamilton and Pasmore's concern with the discovery of the microscopic structures of natural objects, all are concerned with the powers and revelations of child art. And again the name of Herbert Read is significant in this development. Renaming Read's category of 'the activity of observation' - by which Read meant the 'individual's desire to record his sense impressions, to clarify his conceptual knowledge, to build up his memory, to construct things which aid his practical activities' - as the category of 'Construction', Hudson in particular was advocating and celebrating the child's ability to construct qualities of creative awareness by methods of trial and error; qualities which were generally thwarted and negated by exposure to cultural and artistic preconceptions.

In sum, then, British art education was attempting to belatedly catch up with the experimental, formally-questioning approaches of Modernism. And in the above sense, the originators of the Basic Design philosophy shared the common assumption that before students could realistically practice 'art', all

held beliefs and preconceptions about method, meaning, skill and creativity must be dismissed. In Hamilton's words, art begins with a 'clearing of the slate'.

The great celebration of the Basic Design ideology of art education was the 1959 exhibition, again at the ICA, entitled The Developing Process. By this time the founding personalities were already spearheading the general processes of change from the provincial centres of Leeds and Newcastle. Three excerpts from the exhibition's catalogue, reprinted to illustrate the examples of actual Basic Design output in the recent travelling retrospective A Continuing Process, capture the spirit of the times - and show why the change in eduactional philosophy was so dramatic.

Alan Davie:

> My teaching is based on a philosophy of the irrational, and I work with the conviction that Art is something basically natural to man; an actuality motivated by a faith in the actuality of existence which is outside and beyond knowing.
> My first duty as teacher is to relax the student. This is not a state of half-sleep or languid stupor, but one of poise and clarity, with a conservation of vital energy as in a coiled spring awaiting a trigger release. It is difficult to rid oneself of false concepts of Art based upon knowledge and cleverness, and no teacher-student relationship can be satisfactory if it is one between a superior (knowing) and an inferior (ignorant). One must learn to have faith in the intuituion which 'knows' without knowledge.

Victor Pasmore:

> The idea of a static system which every system must copy is not compatible with the dynamic aspirations of modern art. A modern 'basic' course, therefore, should assume a relative outlook in which only the beginning is defined and not the end.

Richard Hamilton:

> The tasks I set my first year students are designed to allow only a reasoned result. Rarely is a problem presented in terms which permit free expression or aesthetic decision. The student is prompted to think of his work as diagrams of thought processes - equipment which will enable him to derive further conclusions.

An assessment of the popularity of the Basic Design course structure, in particular the ways this distinctive and indisputably 'modern' philosophy, with its reworking of traditional art education themes of nature, relativity and aesthetics, may have collided with student expectations, will be made later. First I will consider how its radical intentions came to translate into a key area of the whole institutional fabric of the British art education system: to consider the motivations, results, and some of the effects of the Coldstream reorganisation. As the recent biographer of the Basic Design enterprise, David Thistlewood, claims:

> Their ideas had direct and indirect representation to the Coldstream Commission, and through its recommendation preparatory courses came into existence in every significant Art School and College in the country. (27)

The National Advisory Council on Art Education, under the Chairmanship of erstwhile Euston Road teacher Sir William Coldstream, was appointed in January 1959 'to advise the Minister of Education on all aspects of art education in establishments of further education'. The Council had its fair share of Fine Artists and Designers, not least of whom was a further member of the Euston Road school, Victor Pasmore. Significantly, the Commission grew not from a concern with the

academic content and general relevance of art training courses, but from a general feeling of dissatisfaction with the system whereby such courses were assessed and examined. Again, this was to prove crucial to the later, subsequent student experience of art and design education.

The National Diploma in Design had been instituted in 1946 to replace the system, in force since the Board of Education's revisions of 1913, in which students initially confronted a preparatory and filtering Drawing Examination and then entered advanced courses specialising in one of the Industrial Design, Illustration, Painting and Modelling categories. In 1946 the Drawing Examination gave way to the Intermediate Examination in Arts and Crafts and, for advanced students, the existing four broad areas of specialisation yielded to a mass of precise and highly specialised subject areas. But rigorous in the extreme, and with a centralised system of examination controlled by the Ministry, the new structure had been in existence only one year when questioning of its operation arose. In 1947 the Committee on Art Examinations was formed to investigate possible ways of liberalising its procedures; in particular the chance of delegation of responsibility for the actual NDD courses, subject of course to external supervision, to the college institutions themselves. Following the publication of the Bray Report in 1948 - which had also been concerned with a more substantial linkage of the NDD to industry following representations by the Council of Industrial Design - the National Advisory Committee on Art Examinations was established with the declared aim of implementing moves towards greater levels of college autonomy.

But almost inevitably, acknowledging the consistently troubled history of the British art education system, the promise or threat of reform was to lead to an ideology demanding more substantial and deeper change. And this the system got in the shape of the Coldstream Report. Published in 1961, the Report recommended the complete abolition of the National Diploma in Design and its replacement by a new advanced qualification in art and design skills, the Diploma in Art and Design (Dip.AD), equivalent in status and quality to a university degree.

Clive Ashwin summarises the differences in emphasis between the two qualifications:

> The NDD had been a vocationally-orientated qualification, entailing for its students the pursuit of a chosen narrowly defined studio activity; the proposed Dip.AD was to offer art and design subjects in a broad general context of grouped activities to be known as 'Areas'. (28)

In an interview with Peter Fuller, David Hockney made clear his views on the combined age and qualification bar to the free study of art beyond school level:

> This is totally insane. It means that you get people going to art schools because it's their second or third choice, whereas a lot of those with a real passion for drawing and painting are excluded automatically. Silly people who have no faith in art are running the art schools. (29)

Hockney could have more correctly apportioned blame in the first instance to the Coldstream Report's deliberations. For following the recommendations contained in its instrument of foundation, the Ministry of Education's Circular 340 of July 1958, the NACAE stated that entrants to the new Diploma should, with the vague proviso of waiving in the case of those demonstrably

'temperamentally allergic to conventional education', be at least 18 years of age and equipped with five GCE ordinary passes, of which at least three should be in acceptable academic subjects. To compound the initial problems of entering and gaining the art student experience - but to reinforce the notion that the Dip.AD was the true equal of the university first degree - all prospective students, with few exceptions, should initially complete a one-year preparatory course. Whereas, the Report concludes, 'each art school should be free to construct its own pre-diploma courses without reference to any national body', it also demanded, demonstrating the pervasive influence of Basic Design thinking on the members of the Council,

> The general aim of all these courses should be to train students in observation, analysis, creative work and technical control through the study of line, form, colour and space relationships in two and three dimensions.(30)

In addition the pre-diploma, or Foundation courses would be expected to introduce elements of study outside of that recognisable as formal art training. The History of Art could, it was hoped, be readily accomodated into general thoughts of what a comprehensive art training should contain. But the more loosely-worded area 'complementary studies' could be problematical in both construction and acceptance. As it happened as we shall see in the next chapter, both these revisions were to prove contentious in the extreme when they confronted student assumptions about the nature of contemporary artistic practice and the function of art training.

The Coldstream Report recommended, moreover, that these elements were to continue into the Diploma studies; although allowing college authorities a degree of discretion, around

15% of the total course content should be designated for the areas of complementary studies and the History of Art. In this sense it was hoped - and the inevitable specialisation of any course of advanced, degree-level training notwithstanding - the Dip.AD would escape the limitations of its predecessor by acknowledging:

> that the aim should be to produce courses conceived as a liberal education in art in which specialisation should be related to one of a small number of broad areas or, to put it another way, that a subject that is principally emphasised should always be studied in a broad context. (31)

So although a compartmentalised structure was envisaged - in which students would broadly subscribe to one of the four recommended specialisations of Fine Art, Graphic Design, Textile Design and Fashion Design, and 3D Design - the courses would permit art education to benefit from a widening of the art educational ideology along the lines of conventional university undergraduate intellectual training. And anyway, all students would study a common core element of Fine Art throughout their course's duration.

All this concern with the academic status of art training did not imply, of course, that the old concerns for such an education's role as potential sourse of aesthetic and technical feed into industry had suddenly evaporated. Against the intellectual dreams of the Coldstream Council, the Department of Education's hopes, expressed in its annual review of 1961, sound more familiar, more pragmatic:

> The new diploma will play a part in meeting the challenge facing British firms by helping to raise standards of design which seem at times

> to be inferior to those of overseas competitors. The high standard of the diploma will present a real challenge, and at the same time an opportunity to colleges approved for diploma work: and likewise to commerce and industry, without whose co-operation successful students cannot emerge as successful designers. (32)

With a view to establishing and preserving the Dip.AD's 'high standard', the Coldstream Report recommended the foundation of an executive body to oversee the practical implementation of its designs within the national college and school of art structure: to review curricula and syllabus; to maintain standards of admission and graduation; and to consider 'the quality and experience of teachers conducting the courses.' In May 1961 the Minister of Education appointed the National Council for Diplomas in Art and Design (NCDAD), under the chairmanship of Sir John Summerson; to share the premises, in Park Crescent, London, of the National Council for Technological Awards.

The Coldstream Council had envisaged the launching of the first Dip.AD courses in 1963. Administrative Memorandum 13/61 of the Department of Education foresaw the last examinations for the award of the NDD being held in 1965.

But the problem for the NCDAD, committed as it was to ensuring that the courses to replace the NDD were of the breadth and standard demanded by the Coldstream Council, was that colleges and schools of art which had apparently been successfully training students under the old system were now incapable of meeting the higher criteria of its replacement. The Council asked for applications from colleges to stage the Dip.AD in July 1961 and 'battle was joined in February 1962' as the new body embarked on a systematic process of sifting applications

following visits to aspiring institutions. The Council's troubled findings are shown in its First Report, published 1964. Ashwin states the problems:

> The NCDAD had considered applications from 87 colleges, 13 of which had been ruled out by the Ministry on administrative grounds not detailed in the Report; a further course applicant withdrew. This brought the number of standing course applications down from 201 to 182. Of these only 61 - a third - met with the approval of the NCDAD and its Panels; of the 87 colleges which initially applied for recognition only 29 eventually succeeded in gaining the approval of both the NCDAD and the Minister to run the Dip.AD courses. (33)

The reasons for this wholesale rejection are too numerous to be fully mentioned here, but include teachers' attitudes to research, low standards of accomodation and facilities, and the questionable intellectual traditions of the institution. But all the time the yardstick applied was the perceived quality of university education. Was there a pattern of university-style research in the college? Did the library and lecture accomodation equal that of the universities? Was the intellectual ambience sufficiently stimulating? Hence no courses in technical colleges were approved. If nothing else, the NCDAD's rigidity led to severe logistical problems: an imbalance between supply and demand.

The NDD and the Dip.AD co-existed until the former's demise. But even in the early years of the new course's implementation, it was obvious that expectations on all levels of participation were being frustrated. On one level the problems associated with the transition meant that a strong competitive ideology had entered the art education system: as Macdonald

states, for the year 1964 'there were only 1480 places available on Dip.AD courses and 3030 pre-diploma students. In London in the same year there were over 400 applicants for one centre'. But the problems also signalled a strong divergence of opinion and interest between students and staff and administrators of the restructured system. The DES annual review of 1963 recognised the growing symptoms of tension early:

> Considerable competition developed for places on the approved courses but despite the number of applicants, all of whom had completed pre-diploma courses, some principals reported difficulty in selecting sufficient entrants of the right calibre.

Claiming the right to be marginal, it seemed, was a chancey and uncertain endeavour.

The conflicting demands being placed on the art education system were recognised also by the NACAE in the Addendum to its First Report, published 1965. In particular it stressed a fact to college administrators (who in turn were urged to inform prospective pre-diploma students) which had somehow escaped adequate recognition in the founding philosophy of the system: that successful completion of the one-year preparatory course far from guaranteed a place on a Dip.AD course. Although the Dip.AD system itself was to be short-lived - its replacement by a B.A. and the accompanying merger of many autonomous art schools into larger educational networks in the early 1970s, as we shall see in the next chapter was seen as a further problem for negotiation - throughout its existence a far larger number of qualified students were attempting to gain entry than the available courses could absorb.

This chapter takes my institutional history of one problem area of the modern experience of artistic practice up to the situation, the state of the art in the early and mid 1960s. The training of the Fine Art professional and the commercial Designer has never been an untroubled affair since interest and concern, from whatever quarter, was first expressed. And in the 1960s the tensions, the conflicting interests and ideologies were certainly not subdued by the measures of reform to the art education system. In 1968 the contradictions between the different ideologies of artistic practice, between the different experiences of the realities of modern art's institutional organisation erupted again; most spectacularly, but not only at Hornsey College of Art in North London. The expression of discontent and disaffection forcibly and eloquently argued by the students (and some staff) of Hornsey represents, I would argue, a restatement of the spirit of Romantic bohemianism: an attempt not only to relocate and redefine the cultural position of artistic practice, but to redefine, in turn, the problems and the solutions of wider cultural and political life around artistic, aesthetic ideals. Truly a style of cultural provocation and refusal 'engendered by history', the 'Hornsey Affair' provided one of the most impassioned and powerful elements of the late '60s counter-cultural moment. (34)

Notes and References: Chapter Nine.

1. Warhol and Hackett, 1981, p.21
2. Pevsner, 1973, p.262
3. ibid. p.267/8
4. Hughes, 1980, p.194
5. ibid. p.194
6. cited Open University, 1975, p.30
7. Art Monthly, 42, 1980/1
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9. Watney, 1982, p.8
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16. Central Office of Information pamphlet, 114, HMSO 1975
17. HMSO, op.cit.
18. Fuller, 1980, p.60
19. Hockney, 1978, p.10
20. cited in Macdonald, op.cit.
21. see Boyson's comments cited in Art Monthly's 'page two', no.45, 1981
22. Cornford, in Creedy, 1970, p.201
23. Comments by Frank Whitfield on the experience of Eduardo Paolozzi at the Slade. From Arts Council, 1976, p.8
24. cited in Hutchinson, op.cit. p.189
25. HMSO, Education Survey 11, 1971

26. Thistlewood, 1981, p.4

27. ibid., p.10

28. Ashwin, op.cit., p.93

29. cited in Fuller, op.cit., p.173

30. cited Ashwin, op.cit., p.96

31. cited Ashwin, op.cit., p.98

32. Department of Education and Science Report, 1961.

33. Ashwin, op.cit., p.105

34. I will concentrate on Hornsey over, say, the student 'problems at Guildford, for the following reasons: Hornsey was by far the most widely reported and seemed to represent, for the popular media at least, some deep 'sign of the times' malaise; the writers amongst the college's staff and students 'got it together' far more succinctly than at other institutions - Hornsey is the best documented example of art school revolt; its peculiarities fed more directly into later debates and revisions to the art education structure.

CHAPTER TEN

> Up to now a fine-art student on graduation has tended to have the following rank-order of aspirations: 1) Make it with some West End gallery and become a Name. 2) Teach part-time in an art school. 3) As an absolute last ditch, teach children.
>
> Christopher Cornford, Letter to Jean Creedy.

> No revolution not done for its own sake, for the joy of discovery and creation, can be worth doing, or can succeed.
>
> Art students have been notably anti-intellectual and lately anti-revolutionary - their subversiveness is not founded on, or nourished by, a reading of Marcuse, Debray, Fanon, etc. who are the distant inspirers of many 'revolutionary' students.
>
> Comments by students and staff, Hornsey College of Art, 1968, The Hornsey Affair.

Central to the artistic production of all the Fine Artists discussed in the second part of this thesis has been the stated or implicit concern that the practice of their skills and the expression of their ideas was and could only be an autonomous activity. Whatever their attachment to the demands of the Romantic tradition, in its more subtle and questioning guises, there has been the belief that art could not be the unwilling servant of the demands and extrinsic influences of the wider social world. It may, at given historical moments, make social and cultural gestures, overtly politicising artistic practice in the name of a cause, but it must never be wholly and dogmatically subordinate to any external, non-artistic cause. Art may be sold, and the value of artistic practice realised on the general capitalist market, but its more profound artistic value must never be tied to nor bound by such laws and abstract

formulae of use-value and exchange-value as may govern the relationships and processes of capitalist society. Art's practices, essentially 'different' in definition and actuality from those of non-art practices, cannot be subject to external, non-art assessment; nor be 'proven' in the rigorous sense applied to other worldviews, ideas and scientific methods.

From these fundamental premises of the Romantic spirit, we have witnessed a continuing historical process of bohemian 'refusal': a tense and strained dialogue conducted by generations of artists with both the institutions of the non-art world and those bodies, processes and institutional structures pressing immediately on artistic practice. If the 'problem situation' of political affiliation and social intervention characterises the former category of demand, the 'inner' tensions of artistic practice have been most glaringly carried in the developing ideologies and strategies of art education. The centrality of art education to my developing thesis on the history of bohemian ideology will become clear in this chapter.

For the problem of art education focuses one area of the essential 'peculiarity' of art, and one face of the late 1960s British counter-culture: a sphere of influence and debate where an historically tenacious ideology of autonomy, cultural refusal and social separation confronts the realities of an institutional practice which, despite occasional declarations and pretensions to the contrary, has incorporated an equally tenacious devotion to pragmatism. Examination, assessment, the grading of art and the art student, the contrived and ideologically-suspect course structure, as well as the questionable deeper ideologies

of the social relations of art education: all have tended to historically run counter to the demands of the Romantic artistic personality. This may be inevitable: but it's the stuff good dialectical histories are made of! As Charles Madge and Barbara Weinberger state, referring to their empirical study of art students and art colleges:

> Nearly all the tutors of our survey explicitly rejected former academic criteria and modalities in art. Their work and utterances were anti-academic in the sense of being ironically critical about conventions and traditions of art considered academically respectable in the recent past. Yet, because of their own academic role and functions in relation to students, they could hardly avoid a certain de facto academicism, even if it looked very different on the surface to earlier varities. (1)

In 1968 the surface tension of the situation broke, calling into question notions of inevitability and respectability. The paradoxes and contradictions which had previously remained active but restricted in access and exposure, exploded prominently on the media stage, shattering the veneer of placidity and introversion central to popular images of art schools as educational institutions. That the disruption should occur in the colleges and schools of art rather than the other settings of art education (University Fine Art departments, Centres of Art Teacher Education etc.) reflects both their strength as front-line carriers of opposing artistic ideologies and their own chequered and controversial histories. As education commentator Dick Field has stated, 'of all the institutions concerned in the astonishing development of art in education in the last fifty years, the schools of art have had perhaps the most difficult time.'(2)

Other, more rhetorical versions cloud the issue. Accounting for the Chaos in the Art Colleges, Tom Nairn and Jim Singh-Sandhu once argued against the traditional ideologies of art and art colleges as pervaded by the invidious 'bourgeois myth' of 'genius':

> Traditionally, art colleges were the gypsies of educational society: a dubious fringe, with a certain romantic appeal for the more misguided sons and daughters of the bourgeoisie. (3)

One of the problems with this type of statement, which certainly fits the popular image of art as a sort of finishing school on the cheap, is the question of what the authors mean by tradition, art schools and the bourgeoisie. If 'tradition' extends back to the 1830s, and if the first Schools of Design are included in the conception of 'art colleges', then Nairn and Singh-Sandhu are employing a novel definition of 'sons and daughters of the bourgeoisie'. But perhaps when we consider the early days of the Slade, or the frivolous flourishes of the Bloomsbury circle, or even the history of Hornsey it may be an aposite comment.

But then surely the 'romantic appeal' to which the authors refer is a historically complex arrangement, scarcely reducible to the language of class determinism at its crudest and most personal: the 'romance' of the 'bourgeois myth', as we've consistently seen, owes as much to Courbet, the Surrealists and to Dada as it does to the more available romantic images of Van Gogh, Gaugin, and the image of the artist as a half-crazed wandering gypsy. Comments such as the above skate merrily and glibly over the fact that such romance, myth or otherwise, stems from Romanticism: an ideology of art consistently steadfast in its contempt for the use values and exchange values of art of

a captive but always philistine bourgeois audience. It also tends to over-simplify the history of state intervention into the process of art training: a history which reveals constant attempts to construe the end product of the art education system - the qualified, professional artist/designer - in terms of social use and responsibility.

Secondly, the 'cultural revolution' of the late 1960s, in as much as its historical reality exists beyond Left and liberal sentiment and nostalgia, was inseparable from the complex world of the 'student phenomenon'. The wider student revolts of the period are well documented. The accounts detail strident and still pertinent arguments about the nature of socialist political strategy; the conditions and ideologies of higher education; the role of students within and without capitalist social relations and the use/exchange values of knowledge. And, of course, they provoke images of what at the time was wishfully seen by many otherwise sensible Marxists as the final, cataclysmic crisis of the western capitalist states. But however satisfying it may have been or may still be to link the activities of the Viet Cong on the Ho Chi Minh trail to the activities of Novotny and Gomulka in eastern europe and thus to the LSE demonstrations; or to assemble the Grosvenor Square demonstrations and Che Guevara, Rudi Duschke, LBJ, Herbert Marcuse and Harold Wilson in some massive, unholy dialectical interplay: my concerns must remain more specific. And more earthly.

The counter-cultural protests of the art schools in this period, although set in the wider student milieu are in many respects <u>essentially unique</u>: they have their own material and

ideological history; they raise problems and questions which are specific to this history, and which debate the gaps between ideology and institutional, cultural material practice; and they grow from concerns which, as we've seen in the above history of bohemian ideology, have continually surfaced throughout the history of artistic practice under capitalism. 'The Students' were fighting over definitions of political strategy and educational freedom in participation and access to knowledge. The art students certainly embraced these concerns: but they located their significance, and their solution in a context more fundamental to their own cultural location. Their struggle over definitions centred on the very nature, and thus the purpose of their everyday activity.

On May 28, 1968 the students and some of the staff of Hornsey College of Art occupied their college buildings, staging the famous sit-in which marked the end of the subliminal state of tension within the art schools and adding confusion, further resentment, and open hostility to the suspicions of the bourgeois philistine pundits who were already clogging the pages of the popular and not-so-popular press with their wholesale condemnation of youth, education and everything not soberly discussed at meetings of the Cheltenham Round Table.

Guildford Art School followed Hornsey on June 5, and on June 10, Birmingham College of Art students organised a boycott of first and second year History of Art examinations.

But Hornsey was the catalyst: the focus, in coherence and publicity, for both the wishes for the future and the critique of the present.

Hornsey School of Art was officially opened in October 1882.(4) Very much a private institution in its earliest years - with fees and other monies 'being the sole property of Mr Chas Swinstead the Head Master' - it was also a family affair with no less than five members of the Swinstead family teaching at the school during the 1880s. In 1894, following legislation authorising local authority funding of all forms of technical education, the school began to receive grants ditect from Middlesex County Council:

> Partly as a result of the involvement of the Technical Education Board of the Middlesex County Council the curriculum was expanded to include subjects which were regarded as being of more practical or industrial value....

Clive Ashwin's account of student activities in these early days makes fascinating reading, and certainly belies any simple belief that art schools during this period were just state-funded finishing schools. Discipline was extreme, appearing, even, to approach the levels of slavish obedience required by Cole's earlier Schools of Design system.

During the early years of the twentieth century the School expanded rapidly and proved successful in terms of both student numbers and awards in the various art competitions. Once the drop in student numbers necessitated by the First World War was redressed, the School cotinued to expand its curricula and extend its premises around the Crouch End Hill area of North London. Printing and graphics were added, enhancing both the employment prospects of students and the reputation of the School as a centre of progressive art training ideology. The

1936/37 prospectus, with this point in mind, claims:

> The object of the school and its organisation is to provide instruction and training in all branches of Art, especially with a view to practical application.

Hornsey weathered both the war and the NDD's arrival and departure: the former with some bomb damage sustained and the latter with a reassurance from the then Principal, John Platt, that there was no danger of the School becoming a 'Trade School'. Following the Coldstream innovations which we've already seen on a national scale, Ashwin reveals how Hornsey, by this time retitled a College of Art, fared under the NCDAD inquisition:

> Hornsey received approval in three areas in the first round of course reviews: Fine Art 1 (Painting with Drawing), Fine Art 2 (Sculpture with Drawing) and Graphic Design. In subsequent reviews Three Dimensional Design and Textiles/Fashion were added to the list of courses approved by the NCDAD.

With the Dip.AD regime in operation the college, under the control of the Principal since 1957, Harold Shelton, appears to have initially at least followed the intellectual and upgraded path envisaged by the Coldstream Council. The academic - in the shape of the history of art, psychology, sociology and literary studies - was added to the more orthodoxly artistic. Things looked stable and promising.in Hornsey's specific representation of the early 1960s social relations of art training Until May 1968, when the smooth-running intellectualism of the recently-instituted system was turned against itself, and the banner of a style of artistic discourse with a longer pedigree was raised.

But turning away from Hornsey for a moment, and pondering

the problem in the wider context being raised here, why did the contradictions inherent in the art/capitalism relationship surface at this time? In other words why did the Romantic-ideological critique, the bohemian style of refusal, again seem openly relevant to the institutional conditions of art and the realities of capitalist culture? For this is certainly, I would argue, the way we should approach the counter-cultural protest of the Hornsey students.

At one level, there was a tendency towards a significant relocation of art within the boundaries of this culture. As I've stated earlier, Fine Art was by now marginal to the creation and reproduction of cultural meanings. Fine Artists themselves were a marginal, albeit often affluent body; content, in general terms, either to contemplate various parts of their anatomy in the name of the latest art language or 'ism' or to accept and reflect the cultural and economic ways of seeing surrounding them (conceptualism and Pop Art being examples of these respective forms of artistic behaviour). By the mid 1960s the British Fine Art avant-garde was a vanguard movement with the political dimension of artistic practice deftly and clinically removed.

But the undergraduate-level colleges of art of which Hornsey was a shining example; and particularly, within them, the design departments, stood in another relationship to the wider culture - whatever their particular historical failings they were expected, even demanded to realistically feed the contemporary culture. To stand in a special relationship to the production and reproduction of modern cultural sensibilities.

The paid-up, hard-up and often fucked-up members of the Fine Art fraternity may have been mirroring the commodities and images of a flourishing popular culture, but the students, in Tom Nairn's words, could see themselves becoming 'the producers of this growing culture.'

The Hornsey students, alluding to their previous quiet stance as well as to their relationship to the wider student revolt, put it another way:

> In western countries over the last few years, there has been a changing climate of sensibility, a large-scale cultural change, of which we were the inheritors and would eventually be the producers. This cultural change has far-reaching social and psychological consequences for art students and is one principal factor in explaining our unique position among students both before and after 28 May, which made that day possible. We suffered less from the castration of our sensibilities than many university students and other political groups. Our anti- or a-intellectualism was compensated by more intact senses. Our boldness was founded on our lack of 'knowledge'. We had not learned to live the present through books. (5)

Although the tone of this dramatic and powerful statement is redolent of Marcuse's critique of the 'one dimensional society', with its more or less open celebration of marginality, it also draws most effectively on that 'something about art' - the legacy of past glories of the Romantic spirit - which lays claim to the higher perceptions of the artist and his more passionate, <u>involved</u> models of production. So when the students carry on, and state 'in addition to <u>general</u> cultural change in recent years, and the <u>particular</u> flexibility and sensibility of many art students, we have to some extent been able to maintain an attitude towards <u>work</u> which has long ago been

lost'(6), they affirm that, for them, art remains a distinct form of cultural production: one that refuses to easily strip-away an inheritance of past definitions of artistic meanings. They state a quality underlying the whole experience of the modern artistic exercise - a quality they consciously perceive as lacking in the patterns of work and life dominant in the wider culture. One student records:

> I believe that this hope to work for one's living by living in one's work is a reason why many of us choose to go to art school. (7)

And a possible second level of analysis develops out of such remarks: not from the potentials of artistic practice, subordinate or otherwise, within a notion of social and cultural relations, but from ways the direct realities of cultural relations in the 1960s impinged on such artistic expectations and aspirations.

When Madge and Weinberger asked a sample of art students of both Foundation and Diploma level: 'do you think there are basic principles in art which are teachable and which it is necessary to know?', they found 83% agreement from pre-diploma students, 77% from Dip.AD Graphic Design students, but only 44% agreement from the Dip.AD Fine Art students. When they further asked, 'have you learnt these at school/college?', they found:

	learnt at school	learnt at college
pre-diploma	48%	26%
Dip.AD Graphic Design	44%	67%
Dip.AD Fine Art	17%	17%

They also asked: 'Do you think one needs talent in order to be able to do art?' Agreeing with this rather blunt question

were 73% of Graphic Design students, 57% of pre-diploma students, and 34% of Fine Art Diploma students. Interestingly they add:

> A rather high proportion of Fine Art students either answer that they 'don't know', or 'don't know what talent is', or find the quesion non-sensical. (8)

Whether this suspicion reflects a distrust of college definitions of talent, a Dadaesque rejection of the various myths surrounding creativity, or just plain muddleheaded contrariness is not elaborated in the study. But the statements and statistic do draw attention to the obvious fact that Fine Art students and their Graphic Design contemporaries have markedly different perceptions of certain basic principles built into the structure of art education. In comments by Graphics students about Fine Artists (F.A.s), we learn:

> F.A.s are forced to be a bit more eccentric than others.
>
> F.A.s seems deep. They are more serious and worry more about life.
>
> F.A.s are basically isolationists and work for themselves only. They are too self-indulgent and not as balanced as G.D.s

and most tellingly of all:

> No two F.A.s are the same, one cannot categorise their approach. G.D.s have to do work that communicates to others. F.A.s can do work that communicates only with itself.(9)

This difference of inclination, motive and purpose apparently ran deep throughout the sample of students Madge and Weinberger interviewed. 92% of Dip.AD Graphic Design students thought their outlook was fundamentally different to that of Fine Art students, and, similarly, 83% of third year Fine Art students agreed that there was a divergence of artistic and social

personality between the two groups.

The difference between Fine Artists and Graphic Designers was not limited merely to a divergence of personality within the demands of the art school structure: it was linked further with the career aspirations, and real career prospects, of the two groups of students. As the findings in the Madge and Weinberger study suggest, the Graphic Designers were more oriented towards an instrumental attitude, searching for a positive career use-value for their time at art school. But beyond the rather vague domain of aspiration, into the realm of the objective possibility of pursuing a career roughly in line with their art school studies, the groups remained distinctly separated. The Hornsey students state:

> The art student, still considered a crackpot locally, is wooed by a bourgeois culture, by the business, fashion and advertising world, and, for the few, by the Bond Street market... Previously artists had had the opportunity to fulfill a very elitist function or, if they did not like this, to act in an utterly uncompromising, straightforwardly subversive way, like, for example, the Dadaists. Never before had artists been so much in demand. (10)

But as the Census and Survey department's figures for the activity of art college graduates two years after leaving college suggest, the 'bourgeois culture's' demand is unevenly distributed:

	Dip.AD F.A. %	Dip.AD.G.D %
Painter, sculptor, other FA activity	3	2
Commercial/industrial occupations	7	52
Teaching	32	17
Lecturing	10	2
Full-time art or design courses	19	8
Full-time non-art courses	1	1
Unemployed, housewife etc.	13	8
Not known	1	2
	n=495	n=279

(The above figures are for 1970; reflecting, therefore, the occupations and activities of the class of '68)

The Royal College of Art, as I mentioned in the last chapter, successfully plied its post-graduate wares in creating both the solid and less substantial, transitory images of the '60s. But Hornsey, the 'prize-winning, public-relations miracle', as Tom Nairn, then Lecturer in Sociology at the college cynically referred to its pre-sit-in days, was equally active in feeding the design studios of the consumer society. Staff and students 'slid into identification with the pink plastic garden-seats in the Observer supplement', they were aware that their talents were becoming increasingly swallowed by a culture they saw as freeing them from a sense of marginality, but which also dispossessed their traditional creative autonomy. The students wanted to 'create the culture': not be, as they thought they were, a 'consequence of its demands'.

But the other side of the problem for art college students such as those at Hornsey is reflected in the above statistics. The Graphic Designers, and no doubt the Textile/Fashion Design students, certainly stood in an ostensibly 'harmonious' relationship to commerce and industry. With London as a conspicuous and garish advertisement for the world's pop culture few could have doubted the years of struggle to blend the aesthetics of design education with the practicalities of mass industrial production had finally paid a resounding and highly profitable dividend.

But for Fine Art students the dramatic escape from marginality into the centres of cultural production, even when aspired to, was far from easy - there were only a few more 'jobs' in commerce and industry than there were as a 'Painter,

sculptor, other Fine Art activity'. The AGCAS information sheet Opportunities for Graduates in Fine Art - readily available for the confirmation of worst fears in any college careers office - sells the idea of Fine Art's educational freedom. But it also states:

> Whatever other effects this breadth and freedom has, its influence on the employment prospects of Fine Art graduates is fairly significant. Fine Artists' values and expectations of work are usually different from those of other graduates: and, for various reasons, fine artists are not usually regarded in the same light as other graduates by employers.

Does the 'breadth and freedom' of Fine Art - with its pressing historical emphasis on creative expression; its traditional refusal to sell its inner secrets to the highest commercial bidder; its often reckless tendency to lose itself in the very act of creative production - lend itself well to the more pragmatic, emphatically less idealist realities of capitalist industrial and commercial production? This was one horn of the dilemma rhetorically seized by the Hornsey students, when they stated: 'we protest against the protestant, clean, decent, self-denying, miserable glorification of work'.

Yet it was the inherent historical tendency towards this form of polarisation - the divorce between the experienced and anticipated social realities of production and inbred and contrary artistic ideologies - that the structural reform detailed in the previous chapter had been created to finally resolve. That it failed - moreover, that it heightened the tensions - goes a considerable way towards interpreting the outbreak of students revolts in the late '60s. Tom Nairn, commenting on the Dip.AD reforms and their link to the

'subversiveness of art students', states:

> They constituted a crystal-perfect example of the kind of reforming process doomed to end in revolution. (11)

The 'revolution' of the art school counter-culture.

Nairn and Singh-Sandhu set the historical scene, in their view, for the motivations behind the reforms. Traditionally, they state, art students divide into two distinct patterns of behaviour and personality. On the one hand the 'bohemians'; the aesthetic and cultural hangovers from the nineteenth century who, dreaming of the romance of the Left Bank lifestyle, only desire to 'burn away in peace, undisturbed by education.' This is the 'idiot quietism' of the Romantic, bohemian myth. Co-existing uneasily beside them are the 'Swingers'; the new art professionals, dedicated to lucrative careers in commercial design, and committed to serving the new culture by producing its most pervasive and powerful images. 'The Dip.AD was intended to change all that.' It was intended to make redundant what had already been rendered obsolete.

The Dip.AD was an attempted rationalisation of the entite structure of undergraduate-level art education. The model for the new art school was not the Slade, nor anything approaching the slavish sweat-shops of the early days of the state system - if anything the paradigm was the Bauhaus, 'minus smocks and corn'. Even Nairn, not usually noted for his approval of tinkering with the system, offers muted appluase to an admirable intention while stating its failure in the actual Dip.AD structure. Ideally:

> Such a programme will not produce the 'geniuses'

> of bourgeois myth, nor the silent idiot craftsman-who-sticks-to-his-job so popular with employers; this is the whole point. It must produce the more sophisticated designers of the social environment, aware of the wider meaning of his work and able to match the great creative challenge presented by changing materials and techniques. (12)

To see one of the reasons why the Dip.AD structure failed to meet such a challenge, I will return to the Hornsey students' style of questioning and refusal.

One powerful element of the students' disenchantment with the structure they inhabited stemmed from the Coldstream emphasis on making the art college examinations the equivalent of degrees and thus placing the institutions, nominally at least, on a rough par with the universities. As may be recalled, a central component in this process was the introduction of a complementary studies element, aimed at broadening the scope of the students's educational exposure. Partly the objections to this process rested on an antagonism to the whole idea of degree-equivalence: many of the students' comments in The Hornsey Affair express the argument that the construction of this programme was woefully arbitrary, and that the notion of degree-equivalence rang, from its inception, with tones of bureaucratic and administrative convenience. Apart from any other considerations, the Hornsey students aked, where were the facilities the new universities enjoyed?

> We condemn the binary system of tertiary education, the step-motherly treatment we get from local authorities as compared to the luxury treatment given to the new universities, and the Government's derisive idea of setting up pseudo-universities on the cheap. (13)

Moreover, what would happen to the whole idea when the provincial art colleges were incorporated into the proposed polytechnics?

Following a speech by Anthony Crosland the government had published the 1966 White Paper A Plan for Polytechnics and Other Colleges, detailing a 'binary system' of higher education, and stating that the most significant future developments in this sector would be in the polytechnics. To the Hornsey students, in 1968 threatened with imminent absorption in Middlesex Polytechnic, such proposals were ominous.

Hornsey had initiated a meeting at the ICA in July 1967 to discuss the above proposals and plan counter startegies. The meeting provided an open forum for speakers from many other art colleges. The consensus of opinion was a strong feeling of apprehension: predominantly at the perceived threat that the enhanced status, however weak, the colleges had so recently won would be swallowed and negated in the realisation of this official binary system. Such a system, they thought, could only reinforce the distinct hierarchy within the education system: the art colleges, once inside the polytechnic whale, would be on the botton rung: doomed to fitting an image of vocational study and mindless slog that was abhorrent to both students and staff. The elite within the art education system - the RCA, St. Martin's Camberwell, the Central, from among the London Institutions - would escape. But the other colleges would be swamped in a morass of mediocrity.

But the 'degree-equivalence' ideology was questioned at another, more immediate level. In Notes Towards the Definition of Anti-Culture, opening the staff/student account of the Hornsey sit-in, Tom Nairn states:

> We bourgeois had been elevated as a result of the

> Dip.AD reforms. The improved training which was to be worthy of the new, more serious degree had to incorporate some old-style 'education' in it: book-reading, lectures, seminars, and so on. How typical of the old system to grope for progress in this! (14)

As Nairn and Singh-Sandhu carry on in The Chaos in the Art Colleges, this particular manifestation of institutional tinkering confronted the art students in a paradoxical and certainly problematical way: a way central to univeristy education perhaps, but historically alien to art college practice:

> Apart from laudably providing jobs for graduates (especially art historians) this was a perfect recipe for educational suicide. It consisted in tacking on an academic sector ('Theory') to a wide assortment of traditional forms of training in art and design (the 'Practice'), and piously hoping that it would all fit together. (15)

And two contrasting comments, drawn from a contemporary Sunday Times investigation of the issues thrown up by Hornsey, illustrate the deep-seated, mutual antagonism of position. On the one hand the committed academic historian Pevsner, defending the art history/liberal studies component of the Dip.AD:

> I think it is good for anyone if during his education he is forced to use his brain. Also over half of art schools' products become teachers who must know a certain amount and be articulate.

Contrast this patronising concern with the more cynical realism of someone on the sharp end, pondering the benefits of using 'his' brain in the academic sense. As Pru Branwell-Davies, a student negotiator with the local authority during the sit-in states:

> The word 'Diploma' in gold lettering on a scroll is not much use to you at the moment when you go for a job. It's absolutely no guarantee that you

> are going to be any good as a designer in some crappy industry.
>
> (both quotations, Sunday Times, July 14, 1968)

The academic celebrates the qualification-oriented meritocracy of the art school structure: the student questions both its immediate relevance and its deeper motivations.

But in one sense, the exposure to the content of complementar studies courses, certainly those in the hands of teachers like the indefatigable and loquacious Nairn, provoked an open questioning amongst students of the social relationships of art in which they were immersed: between themselves and society and between art and artistic practice and society. The complementary, liberal studies components were consistently criticised for being irrelevant; for being lumped-on solely to serve the ends of academic respectability; for working hand-in-glove with the rigid academic entrance requirements of the Dip.AD courses to stifle the creative potential of the gifted but non-academic artist. But they provided in the shape of the seminar structure (which in the sit-in, was to prove an invaluable stage for the dissemination of counter ideas) an exposure to coherent critiques of art's cultural standing and location. The Hornsey revolt - as with Guildford, Birmingham and Brighton - was as much about the relationship of art and design education to culture and society as it was about the details of the educational process itself. This crucial concern, often lost in the rhetoric of the wider student revolt, lay behind the the demands for a nationwide dialogue between educators and the educated. For example Document 3, issued by the occupying students and staff of Hornsey in the early days of the sit-in

states:

> 1. A person, who designs, should be a person who is capable of having meaningful relationships; a person with insight into and an understanding of the world around him.
> 2. This individual should have these qualities first, and be a designer (or anything else) second.
> 3. The fact that he may direct himself and his capabilities within a particular limited context (i.e. design) should be purely incidental.
> 4. However, if this 'designer' does not have these qualities, he will not be able to relate what he produces to his social environment, and hence to himself. (16)

Such statements are both demands for reflexivity and participation, a quality lacking in the bureaucratic structures of the existing system, and demands for a radical rethinking of the role of art in the culture it feeds. They include ideas demanding student influence in the selection of staff, and that staff selected open the curriculum of the art schools to embrace an active dialogue and an active practice to counter the obsolete structures and specialisations of the past and present. They state the artist is a social animal.

The students demanded a permanent revolution: consciously the proud avant-garde of the student force, the art schools must be in the vanguard of the demands for demolition of existing authoritarian models: 'for more than any other, art (and art education) represents the type of creative, collective, action to which all revolution aspires.'(17) Further, and crucially:

> The essential situation of art training ought in fact to lend itself particularly well to the development of democratic forms: the concept of a shared creativity, where the learner is more 'inspired' than 'taught' by the older and more experienced practitioner. (18)

The spirit of the artistic vanguard is captured by the conference

convened at the Roundhouse, London between July 8-10 1968 by the Movement for Rethinking Art and Design Education (MORADE). The MORADE symposium demanded not only a radical rethinking and redefinition of the organisational structure: but that a similar process of questioning should be applied to the aims of artistic practice and teaching in the colleges and schools of art. Consequently the conference reiterated the continuing demands for the abolition of the formal GCE entrance requirements to Dip.AD courses (the original Coldstream proposals had mentioned a safeguard for gifted but non-academic students; the Hornsey students made it clear they doubted the existence of the 'loophole for the loopy'.) It questioned, of course, both the degree-equivalence of the Dip.AD courses as implemented, and their tendency towards fostering an over-specialised mentality amongst administrators, staff and students. But it also pondered the nature of the art education process itself, and concluded:

> Conference agreed that the purposes of art education are the creation of awareness, to allow potentially creative people to develop their attitudes, to encourage questioning, to promote discovery, to develop creative behaviour.

The clear fault with the existing system was its failure to come anywhere near realistically fostering these qualities. From Coldstream, through Summerson's ruthless deliberations, to the reality of 1968, the interests of cost-effectiness, smooth administration, and 'slick "eye-catching" courses' had gained an ascendancy over the living, creative, and ultimately liberating qualities that students and some staff saw in their day-to-day practice. The fault, according to the jaundiced eyes of Nairn and Singh-Sandhu, was that the 'contemporary "revol-

ution" in art education has been provoked from above....'

To which 'revolution' are the authors referring? If its to the student revolt - which they saw as revamping the revolutionary exercise and forming an effective counter to the traditional philistinism of the British Left - they're being less than charitable to their comrades. The whole point of the endeavour (and in a real sense, a substantial theoretical claim behind this thesis) was that a powerful ideology of art - an historically-grounded culture of artistic practice, both real and imagined - confronted the extant and incipient realities of one institutional area of capitalist organisation.

But if, as is more likely, they refer to the institutional 'revolution' of the art education system, problems remain for the authors. Nobody would deny that the history of organised art education reveals constant reform and alteration of the structure in the direct interests of the state, commerce and industry. And, as I've attempted to argue, such reform - whether inspired by cost-cutting, 'rationalisation', or, always, linking the practice of art education to industrial production - has consistently run-counter to the aspirations of generations of those 'below', the students. But precisely because of this tension - because the system has carried both the pragmatic and the Romantic, the responsible and the autonomous ideologies of artistic practice simultaneously - art education's institutional history has rarely passively reflected capricious and naked class interest in its day-to-day practice. Institutions and structures, educational ideologies and practices have worryingly conspired to assume a life of their own - questioning the external demands of the state, industry and, more lately,

what Fuller calls the 'mega-visual tradition'. One need only look to the innovations pioneered, at various historical moments and often much to the state's chagrin, at the Slade, the Central, Glasgow, Leeds and Newcastle.

But such comments do not dispute that the Coldstream/Summerson regime was an attempt to impose a rigid structure, a form of educational orthodoxy of the art colleges. One core element in this strategy was the introduction of the Basic Design course component: an educational philosophy that appeared to exist in opposition to the 'permanent revolution', neo-Bauhaus designs of the students. Nairn, upholding the Bauhaus ideal, calls for the 'spirit rather than the "dead and deadening routine" which Basic Design has become in the art schools'. (19)

Basic Design had attempted to destroy the moribund orthodoxies deadening the established methods of teaching art. Such was the ideal of Hudson, Pasmore, Hamilton et al. in the 1950s: and such, one can only assume, was a prime reason its influence expanded following the Coldstream Report, which in all fairness was pursuing a similar objective. But by 1968 Basic Design had unfortunately become yet another orthodoxy, entrenched and inflexible in its scope and application. It's perhaps one thing to deride and ultimately discard the dogmatic teaching of traditional skills and perspectives; it's quite another thing altogether to replace them with child art and the consciously primitive. Fuller, in the way which has endeared his style to very few people in contemporary critical discourse, sees the result of the programme:

> ....encouraging the student either to regress to an infantile aesthetic level, or to immerse him-

> self in the anaesthetic practices of the prevailing culture. (20)

Students, wishing neither of these surely unpleasant results, agreed. In the latter vein, they could see no provision in such a structure for the active assessment of the social, cultural and political context of art. Basic Design may not have been originally formulated solely as a system of abstraction, with all the connotations that word possesses; but to many students, expected to experiment with linear drawing models and constructions in the manner of Hamilton and Pasmore, this was not always apparent. Abstract and formalist art may have historically exhibited political tendencies of a critical variety, but the meaning and situation of any political affiliations are not always readily available. And it is certainly no simple exercise to extrapolate from basic formalistic and conceptual patterns to such questions as 'what is the purpose of art education under capitalism?' or 'whose interests are we serving?' As an ex-student with exposure to Basic Design points out, 'students were invited to search but what for was never specified.'(21) Even the most effete and socially-wayward schools of Art for Art's Sake thought have aspired to some artistic or cultural end.

And more daringly, Macdonald offers:

> A common criticism of basic or foundation courses, as some are practiced, is that, far from liberating themselves, the students produce stereotyped art forms....Some argue that such work forms a basis for industrial design, but not for other art; others, that students are doing tediously with their hands, or with simple tools, what is best done by machines. (22)

This is the context in which the art school unrest of 1968 occurred, the concerns around which the demands were directly artic-

ulated. The Hornsey students, the most notorious of the new student vanguard party, felt themselves to be oppressed by a superficial, monolithic structure conflicting with their interests Their revolt, in its most immediate and accessible form, was an attempt to change the social relations of the art school. That the Hornsey revolt failed in this objective(23) is less important, to use the tone of language of the students themselves, than that the attempt occurred in the first place. A Hornsey student at the MORADE conference stated it had 'showed that it was possible': the 'it' being a conscious questioning of what were seen as the stultifying, obsolescent ideologies pervading both the basic and advanced levels of artistic practice in the art colleges. In Nairn's Situationist, neo-Dadaist language, it proved the power of 'the deed itself, the joyful creation of a community out of the fragments.'(24) It offered - to a liberal studies teacher whose first allegiance was ostensibly to the power of a more established revolutionary theory rather than to the openly metaphysical power of artistic creativity - a solid critique of the Left in Britain and a celebration of the strengths of cultural redefinition: '....a few North London crackpots achieved more than the working-class of this overwhelmingly proletarian country after a century of development.'(25) Whether Nairn would still subscribe to this statement fourteen years later is arguable; if nothing else, it reflects his well known despondency when confronted with the idiosyncracies of British working-class history.

But in another sense, in the form of the interests it was defending and the stylistic postures it was striking, the Hornsey

revolution rose above the specifics of the art school 'community' to question more substantial levels of artistic practice and cultural involvement. This second level of revolt and refusal represents, I would argue, one powerful element in the celebrated and despised British counter-cultural moment. The objections raised and demands made - the style in which they were articulated in both cultural and artistic terms - were direct restatements of Romanticism's historical demands in the modernised context of art colleges in 1968. The actual disruption achieved and the manifestos published by Hornsey students was an instance of high counter-cultural tension in the best traditions of the bohemian style.

The art college revolt had no pre-formed solution: it was a conscious working-through of Romantic ideologies of artistic practice in terms of the contemporary experience of trainee Fine Art professionals. A student recalling the events of the summer of 1968, in a later edition of the Hornsey paper Revelations, stated:

> In the six weeks of the Hornsey Revolution I had more education than I had ever previously experienced. A new sort of freedom emerged, a freedom to work, learn and develop. A new surge of life...We had freedom to express ourselves creatively and yet end our isolation from the world, the helplessness of the individual was at an end, we began to realise that art was revolutionary....(26)

Although, of course, involved in the general milieu of student dissent of those times, the art students saw themselves as decisively apart: as the true creative vanguard: as the element of the student population that experienced most deeply the conradictions of an antagonistic system of production and could

thus articulate the problems, and offer the cultural solution, on a more profound level. And if they had no pre-formed solutions, they had more than a trifling grasp on the nature of their cultural location; through their day-to-day activities, they were well versed in the ideological disputes of the past; they knew something of precedent - in short, their 'problem situation' had a real history, invoking the spirit of ideological 'solutions' of the history of modern artistic practice to counter the demands of contemporary, modernised experience.

Where the view from the LSE was one of relative security, the Hornsey students, in their immediate college experience and their imminent future, confronted real insecurity: they realised their material class position was marginal, and in this realisation they made the most resonant comments about the nature of the capitalist experience of work and leisure. Fine Artists knew their likely fate was enrollment in a huge artistic lumpen-proletariat, and from this knowledge they articulated the late '60s counter-culture's most profound critiques of the nature of capitalist market relations and education. All the students answering the new Romantic call to arms knew the qualities of artistic practice they held so dear - the reasons many of them had gone to art school in the first place - were suppressed, vaguely defined, or under direct threat. In defence of creative autonomy, the aesthetic dimension and the 'higher', positive cultural definition of art's use-values, they attacked the crude materialism of 'one dimensional' society. But their guiding ideologies came from <u>within</u> art rather than from Marcuse: their critiques and attempted redefinitions were

built into an institutional framework which had matured over two centuries of art education snd the modern experience of capitalist artistic practice.

This is the sense in which a facet of the counter-culture can only be made sense of in terms of the social history of art: in the bohemian responses to work, leisure, art, culture and life offered by the art school students, the counter-culture's style of cultural expression had its own real, tangible institutional history. At Hornsey and other colleges an historically grounded ideology of artistic and cultural refusal met with a bang, in the social relation of art, the opposing contemporary social reality of educational control, market obscurity, career marginality and a pervasive and deep sense of cultural mediocrity. Nairn is correct: to a large extent it was 'the deed itself' which was important: the <u>style</u> of cultural refusal celebrated by art students who realised sufficient about their institutional and cultural location to <u>romanticise</u>, <u>reflect</u> and <u>refuse</u>. In the process, echoing and restating demands from art's real and believed romantic/Romantic history. As the Hornsey Commission realised, it was all about purpose, content and position:

> Art college graduates can variously be people able to fill existing roles in society, people capable of proposing changes and innovations, and of constructively criticising society, or people independent of or alienated from society. Courses in art colleges should allow for these variations. (27)

A restatement of my own general argument, the train of reason leading to this point will follow a few comments on why, perhaps, a similar style of reflexive thought has been lacking in areas of Marxist cultural and artistic criticism.

Notes and References: Chapter Ten.

1. Madge and Weinberger, 1973, p.269

2. Field, 1970, p.90

3. Nairn and Singh-Sandhu, Chaos in the Art Colleges, in Cockburn and Blackburn (eds), 1969, p.104

4. Most of the immediate details on the history of Hornsey College of art, as well as the following three references, are drawn from Ashwin, 1982.

5. Students and Staff of Hornsey College of Art, 1969, p.64

6. ibid., p.65

7. ibid., p.66

8. Madge and Weinberger, op.cit., p.79

9. Madge and Weinberger, op.cit., pp.113/114

10. Hornsey Staff and Students, op.cit., p.68

11. Nairn, The Listener, Oct.17, 1968

12. Nairn and Singh-Sandhu, op.cit., p.105

13. Hornsey Staff and Students, op.cit., p.53

14. Hornsey Staff and Students, op.cit., p.18

15. Nairn and Singh-Sandhu, op.cit., p.109

16. Hornsey Staff and Students, op.cit., p.35

17. Nairn and Singh-Sandhu, op.cit., p.115

18. Nairn and Singh-Sandhu, op.cit., p.103

19. Nairn, op.cit.,

20. Fuller, Art Monthly, 47, 1981

21. Walker, Art Monthly, 46, 1981

22. Macdonald, 1970, p.270

23. The revolt achieved, firstly, a report Unity and Variety - Current Problems in Art and Design Education, from a body established in July 1968 under the chairmanship of the Earl of Longford. It was largely sympathetic to student demands and made a series of points endorsing their criticism:

one of its objectives was:

> To ensure that educators are better able to know how to meet the requirements of art and design education. p.10

But the Hornsey College authorities remained less idealistic than either Longford of the students - authority was maintained and the students sensed appeasement.

On Nov.13, 1968 Parliament appointed the Select Committee on Education and Science (Student Relations). The report, published the following year, although characteristically circumspect, approached the truth:

> The characteristic feature of student unrest in Colleges of Art was the debate on the content and purpose of art education. The Diploma in Art and Design was subject to serious criticism. Witnesses asserted that matters of representation, participation, facilities and those other causes of student unrest elsewhere played only a subordinate part in the agitation.....

24. Nairn, op.cit.

25. Nairn, op.cit.

26. cited in Widgery 1976, p.332

27. Hornsey Commission, p.6

CHAPTER ELEVEN

> It was Franklin Rosemont who spoke, in a recent article, of a bus driver in America who announced to his nine passengers that he could no longer endure the monotony of his job and said that he was leaving at that moment for Florida and any passengers who wished to accompany him were welcome to remain on board. Two passengers got off at once - shortly afterwards another, convinced that the driver meant what he said, also got off. The others decided to go to Florida. Hours later, in Southern Indiana the bus and half dozen passengers were stopped by the state police. The driver and passengers were placed under arrest and returned to their home town.
>
> An anecdote recalled by Surrealist artist, Conroy Maddox in his comments on the content of the 1978 Hayward Gallery exhibition, Dada and Surrealism Reviewed. From Art Monthly, 17, 1978.

The intention of the second section of this thesis has been a reassessment and relocation of a style of ideological protest within the social conduct and artistic practice of one sphere of cultural production. Bohemianism, my covering term for the ideological refusals and revolutions within art, has been used to explicate a theory of the social context of artistic change within a system of capitalist cultural and economic relations. As such, and to the point so far that I've taken my exploration of the reality of the British counter-culture in the late '60s, the elaboration of the historical instances of bohemian refusal has been forced to apprehensively penetrate the claimed domain of the Art Historians - a mystical, consciously esoteric world where few sociologists, often with sound reasoning, dare to tread.

That the systematic exploration of forms of artistic practice has been anathema to the earthy interests of the fraternity of socialist sociologists is understandable: a certain strength of

will is required to penetrate the Fine Art discourse which, when it does not entangle itself in a quagmire of seemingly aimless subjective judgements, is constructing a language of meaning and reference unintelligible enough to rival the most excessive and bizarre output of French and American schools of social philosophy. The blame for the paucity of reciprocal dialogue between artistic practice and social structure is as much attributable, if it must be apportioned at all, to the overt and overwhelming bias within the academic Art History establishment against any realistic contact with the ugly, prosaic world of economic and (low) cultural relations. (The review by establishment hearties of Hughes' excellent The Shock of the New is illuminating on this attitude.) But in both cases the dread of contamination by alien life-forms constitutes a traditional enmity; addressed as much to the psychology of the respective dissenting discipline as to any rational and rectifiable state of ignorance.

For a statement of one side of the antagonism I would agree with Griselda Pollock, who makes a pertinent point beneath the layers of plodding, elephantine New-Marxist-Criticism language:

> Art history has to be recognised as a complex and paradoxical practice in which art is differentiated from all other areas of knowledge, secured by the positing of a centre, the artist as the cause of all art. Art is distanced from history - produced as an autonomous, transcendental condition of human subjectivity and creativity. And, as importantly, art history is differentiated from all other discourses which attempt to reclaim art from that space and reconstitute it as a historically determined practice while deconstructing the centrality of the artist as a subject of and for the work of art.(1)

Although one may wonder, with equal justification, who is going

to reclaim the language of social analysis from the pernicious pretensions of Screen's contributors - a journal in which the concept of 'author' is indeed correctly pondered - the message of most of the above quotation, that art history celebrates the minutae of the artistic personality and style and castigates the material forces of history, is a good one. Pollock argues, further, that only 'marxist intervention' into the 'site' of art history can rescue the practice from 'bourgeois ideologies of art and artist'. Although for me this conjures images of donkey-jacketed and safety-helmeted marxist labourers flailing the air with picks and shovels in hot pursuit of elusive myths and spectres, the prescription is in need of some form of application.

But as we saw in the opening pages of this section, attempted Marxist interventions into the art history discourse, while certainly introducing the social context into the study of artistic practice, have frequently been ambiguous and generally problematical in exercising any long-term historical appeal: a situation due in no small part to the ambivalence and hedging of Marx's own deliberations on aesthetics and the situation of art and the artist within capitalism.

What does surface from the often impenetrable depths of speculation about the relative qualities of silk worms and artists is Marx's positive location of the practice of art within the domain of social production. In a real sense, the artist, caught somewhere on the cusp between marginality and subservience, either toes the material and ideological line offered or, exceptionally, questions the dominant ways of cultural perception, taste, and critical orthodoxy. The problem for Marxist critics and Marxist

aestheticians is deciding quite what criteria should be used to differentiate between the mundane majority and the great art of the exceptions. Attempting to extrapolate from the premises of the historical materialist method to a concrete account of practical aesthetic selection in the history of art - not troubling, for obvious reasons, the more rarefied world of the art historians - has rendered many socialist theorists, ever keen to materialise an ideological practice, into a state of near apoplectic insensibility. Certainly in terms of originality if not volume of output. Perhaps conscious of fighting a losing battle of wit and nerve against the legacy of Marx's own speculations and theoretical absences, even the best critics have veered towards a position from which the substance of the work of art is reduced to the level of debased ideological reflection of class interests. From this position, therefore, the 'masterpiece', the great and transcendent work of art, is that which escapes the limitations in expression and meaning of the historically-specific ideological and material conditions of its production. This is certainly the case with such accounts of the mode of artistic production as John Berger's coherent and influential Ways of Seeing.

But the problem with this style of analysis, as Peter Fuller has argued, is that the positing of a clean fit between art as property-value and the qualities of the aesthetic sensibility encounters real epistemological difficulties when confronted with the obvious trans-historical dimension of the truly great works of art. Why, in other words, can we still make sense of, identify with and be emotionally moved by art which conspicuously

pre-dates our own experiential conditions of existence. For Fuller the problem is more existential: the 'exceptions' are those which most accurately mirror the basic psychological and biological conditions of man, which are themselves trans-historica and not tied to specific social and cultural conditions of production and reproduction. The 'exceptions' to the 'special relationship' between art and private property become the most truthful expressions of man's biological constants, his most elemental fears, desires and passions.

Both of these positions have invited dissent from within the ranks of the Marxist critical fraternity. But what they share in the process of constructing a materialist basis for the critical/aesthetic selection arrangement is an adherence to the proposition that painting is in itself a material practice. As Fuller states:

> I see expression as involving the imaginative and physical activity of a human subject who carries out transforming work upon specific materials (in which I include both historically given pictorial conventions and, of course, such physical materials as paint, supporting surface etc.). (2)

While this is a statement with which most Marxist-oriented art commentators would concur, what is rarely emphasised, beyond this recognition, is that the critical process <u>itself</u> is also a material process. One which, in line with Fuller's prescription, involves the 'imaginative' transformation (interpretation/promotion/negation) of specific materials (the art oject/work of art) in line with 'historically given' conventions. In this sense, what is lacking, or at least only tacit in the general critical discourse is the element of reflexive assessment: the idea that the critic himself is involved in the historical,

material practice of art. All critics, those working to the obscure principles of a Marxist science of aesthetics notwithstanding, tend to assume a declared position of informed objectivity: what this reveals, beyond the psychological needs of the critics themselves, is an assumption that the actual practice of art is something external to the critical/selective process. The artist produces: the critic observes and commentates.

The difference, perhaps, between many Marxist sociologists of art and the maligned members of the bourgeois critical establishment is that the latter conduct their activity with a conscious knowledge of their role within the process of artistic selection. Continuously pushing to the fore, preserving, discarding: the critic (whether Ruskin in the 1860s or Castelli in the 1960s) is a figure beyond mere free-floating observer in history. For its part, Marxist sociologies of art - and Marxism for all its faults in this area provides the only credible model structuring the social context of art - works within definitions of artistic achievement (approving, dismissing, politicising etc.) which are essentially pre-given.

Perhaps the contemporary Marxist critic would strengthen his or her position within the material practice of art if more 'discovered' 'exceptions' were projected onto the world's art stage in constructing the theory of class (or biological) aesthetics. The socialist critic readily distinguishes between the exceptional artist escaping the ideological constraints of bourgeois culture, and the banality of the immoral majority, mindlessly acquiescent in the art-political battle for control of cultural ways of seeing. But, like the selection process employed in my own history of the 'exceptions' of bohemia, the

work of choosing the historical escape-artists has been done: largely by the redoubtable efforts of the detested bourgeois critical establishment.

Does this mean the whole enterprise is rendered invalid; that the Marxists, already struggling against their own history, have lost the war against pure academicism before any battle is joined? No - not when we reiterate the sociologist's and the socialist's dogmatic insistence on introducing the social-structural context of artistic practice. The art historians are content to see Art as Art: Marxism and (most) sociology sees art, where it sees it at all, as a practice standing primarily in the social world: in its production of commodities and exchange value; its location in the market; its cultural function etc. All of which orders and defines the production of art the art historians, for their sins, are constrained to see as the result of autonomous artistic genius.

This inversion is creditable. It contests the unreal complacency and abstraction of the language of art history. But in the process it tends to construct a version of art history, and artistic selection and progression, which almost inevitably centres on the working of the capitalist market. In other words, and finally reaching the point of this excursion, art is seen as generally suffering (and in its exceptions overcoming) at the capricious hands of an institutional framework essentially external to its own vital organisation.

What this model lacks in its headstrong determination to materially-relate the otherwise spiritual practice of art to the central organising concept of Marxist social theory, is a realisation that the complex processes of artistic determination

and progression are also formed and guided by institutions and organisations of ideas most definitely internal to that practice. Institutions central to a modern, capitalist definition of art. Put another way, why artificially isolate and stress one element of artistic practice - the social conduct of an inherently antagonistic capitalist market - while simultaneously ignoring the forces against and through which the 'exceptions' of such artistic practice have defined and defended themselves. The Art Establishment, sponsor and purveyor of Fine Art and Design wares, thus more accurately and more realistically becomes a critical, selective, funding and educational historical entity possessing and transmitting the full weight of 'historically given pictorial conventions' to which Fuller refers. It has existed as something antagonistic - even in its claimed supportive functions - to the extension of certain ideologies themselves offering to explain the nature of 'free' material artistic practice. The artist Marcel Duchamp realised that creative activity is the combination of the forces of artist, critic and audience:

> All in all, the creative act is not performed by the artist alone; the spectator brings the work in contact with the external world by deciphering and interpreting its inner qualifications and thus adds his contribution to the creative act. (3)

My own focus, bohemian ideology, has existed in terms of and because of institutions both internal and external to the ideologies and material practice of art within a system of capitalist social relations. As those relations have impinged on the practice of art they've included pressing questions of political and social engagement and allegiance, the defining powers and constraining regimes of the art educational system as well as

the more readily visible structures of the work-of-art-as-a-commodity deriving its power and value from the workings of the capitalist market. Central to the organisation of these questions within the institutions of art has been Romanticism.

A common ancestor of all strands of Romantic thought and action was Rousseau. Opposing the Enlightenment stress on rationality, and the attendent rush towards the modernisation of previously 'protected' areas of consciousness and culture, Rousseau offered the antithetical extreme, the primacy of the heart. He could say in correspondence, 'I believe in God as strongly as I believe any other truth, because believing and not believing are the last things in the world that depend on me'. This is not the tendency towards solipsism it appears; it is, however, an encapsulation of the philosopher's antagonistic attitude towards late eighteenth century social development. It rejects, on the one hand, the contemporary belief in an absolute future, predicted and determined by the revelations of science and technological innovation. It stands, in other words, as an indictment of the mindful but heartless striving for a world governed by objective truths dependent for their validity only upon the verifiable experience of either human or physical nature. In Britain one need search no further than the philosophical legacies of Hobbes, Locke and Hume to visualise a system in which the human personality is granted only an epistemological status: within the process of knowledge but without the powers of aspiration, desire and the imagination. Against this tidal wave of emotional mediocrity and personal inhibition Rousseau offered the uniqueness of the individual.

And this leads into the second element of Rousseau's rejection of Enlightenment culture: his concern with the supremacy of the abstract, public sphere over the intimate, private and formerly concrete world of the individual. His philosophy, in its political and social guise, is a cry for the true expression of the individual will in the general will, above and beyond, in a metaphysical sense, the partial and self-serving interests of the divisions of the emerging modern state. As George Boas states in an essay on the 'Romantic Self', Rousseau takes the step of re-uniting the 'moral self' and the 'cognitive self': the now 'takes on the new power of asserting truths which contradict the truths of science and does so on its own authority'.(4)

We're left wondering, of course, whether this power of assertion extends across the social board or is limited to the will of the philosophical personality. Here - concerned with the translation of anti-Enlightenment Romantic philosophy into the ideologies and material practices of Romantic art - it would seem the power to criticise the prosaic truths of culture and science are non-generalisable. Romanticism's philosophy of artistic practice engages with the modern world because it states it is the only one capable of comprehending and countering its force and revealing its intimate secrets. In this sense, therefore, the doctrine of artistic autonomy and creative genius is a 'natural' philosophical enemy of the wider cult of science and rationality. Both offer totalising worldviews; and both claim a privileged status above the teeming, uncomprehending sea of humanity. Both, also, abhor the prospect of a static existence: a modernising culture requires modernisation at all

levels, not least of which is the sphere of production; the modern artistic personality dreads the possibility of creative atrophy. Perhaps a suitable analogy is that offered by John Fowles in The Aristos:

> The artistic experience, from the late eighteenth century onwards, usurps the religious experience. Just as the medieval church was full of priests who should have been artists, so our age is filled with artists who would once have been priests.

But the extension of Romantic artistic practice can be grounded at a more substantial level than a pairing of antithetical world-views. As the innovatory potential of what is increasingly a bourgeois culture came to earth in the necessity of constant practical activity in the social world to create the conditions for the accumulation of wealth, so the social reality of Romanticism, beyond the rhetoric of philosophical posturing, came to reside in the changing material circumstances of art. Genius does not tolerate patronage; but neither does it accept subordination, in its material practice, to the social institutions of capitalism. Art constructs, or attempts to construct a 'private' world unfettered by the encroaching public, social demands of the capitalist market and state because it takes the promise of 'freedom' seriously.

Patronage was in decline by the mid-eighteenth century, prompting the fundamental redefinition of the very nature of artistic practice itself. The artist could no longer work within the safe parameters of visually demonstrating landed privilege and wealth and the sublime truths of religious dramas. But being forced to compete at the general level of commodity production and distribution was scant consolation for the

freedom from the passive roles of direct patronage. What to produce and for whom was no less a problem than the demands of technically-skilled but unimaginative reflection.

The dominant culture offered its initial solution in the form of the new system of artistic patronage and respectability offered by the academies of art that were springing up in the capitals and provincial cities of Europe. In their propagation of the unquestionable 'truths' of the Classical period they may have fitted the culture of solidifying bourgeois societies searching for ideological certainties and 'natural', rational stability - they could only conflict with the aspirations and demands of a new artistic genre gripped by the rhetorical fire and passion of the Romantics. For the 'genius' of the Romantics was not the 'natural' product of society but a quality drawn from Nature: it could not be acquired through the learning of academic skills and knowledge - it could only be emphasised, for those fortunate to possess it, by the unleashing of the artist's 'unconscious drives, inspiration, and interior vision in the making of art'. So when the first President of the British Royal Academy stated in his 1769 Discourse the premises of the academic method:

> that an implicit obedience to the Rules of Art, as established by the practice of the great Masters, should be exacted from the young Students; that those models, which have passed through the approbation of ages, should be considered by them as perfect and infallible guide. (5)

it comes as no surprise to see a pronounced degree of cynicism amongst the ranks of artists. Blake, who considered the Royal Academy purported to teach what was inherently unteachable,

considered he had 'spent the vigor of my Youth and Genius under the Oppression of Sir Joshua and his gang of Cunning Hired Knaves....'(6)

Yet as well as being a conflict of ideologies the anatagonism was over access: to the natural rewards which should rightfully accrue to Natural Genius as well as access to a prospective viewing public. For the academic system, in one form or another, was to increasingly become the primary source of artistic legitimation in a world where little was stable and tangible. At this level the artists, certainly those excluded, were incensed at the despotic, monolithic system of inner, elite patronage which pervaded the growing art establishment. The situation was far from eased when the dealer-critic involvement also strengthened its position in the mediation between artist and public, and genius and reward.

This, then, represents the theoretical groundwork for the sociological analysis of the emergence, continuation and transmutation of the bohemian style. It's unashamedly sociological in intention: in other words it hopefully maintains a realistic grip on the language of Marxist social analysis which, mishandled, so easily drifts into the closed conceptualism and (social) historical philistinism often characteristic of academic art history. It's one thing to adopt the simplifying language of the darker recesses of a student union bar, and mockingly deride the study of historical realities as 's'all bourgeois ideology innit'; it's another thing to proceed from this position, albeit dressed in more sophisticated and Post-Modernist language, to account for the real historical circumstances under which artists

existed and their art was produced.

Bohemianism, if it's to possess any valid meaning beyond the level of denigratory aside and historical footnote about abstract and apparently fathomless hedonistic irresponsibility, needs to be located as the continual practical reworking of the original Romantic philosophy of cultural disenchantment. This naturally assumes that the concept in a revised form is worth the effort of salvaging from beneath the welter of idealised platitudes connoted by its common usage. But the problem would still remain of accounting for a historically active ideology, or system of ideologies within art which have questioned ways of seeing dominant both within art and within the wider culture. And the problem remains of avoiding abstract ahistoricism and the simple reduction of art to ideology.

The sociology of culture usually takes off from some variation on the theme that the object of study is a collective way of making sense of the social world of objective, usually economic relationships. Culture, therefore, whether used specifically or in a generalised sense, represents an open and modifiable system of meanings, responses, strategies and initiatives. But what disappears from models equating culture crudely with ideology is the process of adaption or construction of the cultural formation. More specifically what disappears is the element of human agency: of reflexive, conscious distinction and selection in the process of making sense of the social world. These problems have been discussed more fully in the first section - but when the threshold into the world of artistic cultural practice is crossed they remain. In the case of academic art history, which reveals the consistent

propensity to draw on definitions of culture which are the mainstay of BBC2 production ideologies, the absence of sociological bias is understandable. The tendency, however, of declared Marxist social historians of art to close the cultural process, and see the producers and products of artistic practice as either passive reflections of economic circumstance or, more recently, as carriers of equally passive signification systems is not understandable. Nor is it acceptable. Culture is ideology: but it is a complex system of ideological forces which are never totally cemented; which are grounded in the experienced realities of social production and its supportive institutions; and which persist only as long as they explain the experienced level of social reality. The cultural discourse must be restored as a conscious one: otherwise there's no hope for the future and no sense in the past.

Bohemian ideology refuses the offered institutional sensibility/flooding the structured practice of art. By rejecting or redefining the public 'socialisation' of art; by stressing the virtues of cultural and artistic replacement and innovation; by transforming this negation of tradition into what effectively becomes a cult of youth organised around each successive generation of creative artistic talent - by these means bohemianism questions both the institutional framework of its cultural location and often the very fabric of the wider culture itself. That this process is fraught with both known and unanticipated dangers, that the existential element of the bohemian refusal seems doomed to glorious historical suicide has been argued in the second section of this thesis. The aspiration is that of

the driver recalled in the quotation by Conroy Maddox opening this chapter: an observation which fits, in a specific sense, the attempts by Dada and Surrealism to make the irrational and the spontaneous acceptable modes of action in life as well as in art, but which also, perhaps, depicts the looming fate of the Romantic artist whose dreams of creative autonomy and higher purpose confront the material and institutional realities of a less than sympathetic social world. But then this is as much a part of the Romantic legacy as the trying.

The style of refusal of the bohemian 'exceptions' changes as institutions and demands change. If we revisit, on the one hand Ruskin and Courbet, and then Aestheticism and Symbolism this is exemplified.

As John Berger states in an essay in Permanent Red:

> ....Courbet believed in the independence of the artist - he was the first painter to hold a one-man show. Yet to him this meant independence from art for art's sake, from the prevailing Romantic view that the artist or his work were more important than the existence of the subject painted, and form the opposing Classic view that the inspiration of all art was absolute and timeless. He realised that the artist's independence could only be productive if it meant his freedom to identify himself with his living subject, to feel that he belonged to it, never vice versa. (7)

Ruskin, it may be thought, characterises the variety of Romanticism from which Courbet was escaping. As Michael Sprinker states in an essay Ruskin on the Imagination, 'Ruskin's aesthetics.... begins and ends with a belief in the autonomy of the imagination.' We cannot escape the conclusion, evident in the critic's championing of the PRB, that he offered a 'radical disjunction between the imagination and the world of facts.'(8)

But what binds Ruskin to Courbet is the belief that the

aesthetic truth, the essential authenticity of the painted work of art, is inherently tied to the honest representation of the natural world. Not the natural world of the mid nineteenth century bourgeoisie, but a natural world represented at a deeper level of truth than that extant in 1850s Britain and France. Courbet threw his weight against the aura of bourgeois respectability, winning only a post-dated moral victory; Ruskin opposed the machine age and the transmission of its values through the institutions of the Victorian art establishment, most notably through the Schools of Design. He achieved wealth and fame, but could not penetrate deeply into the skin of a utilitarian system of teaching art and design.

The Aesthetes and The Symbolists, on the other hand, eschewed both the values of a mediocre capitalist social reality and the virtuous pursuit of social critique and conflict: what had been troubling for Courbet and Ruskin was boring and mundane for a later generation. Theirs was an art formed in itself and for itself. Its morality was aesthetic provocation and a rediscovery of the early Romantic 'Storm and Stress' dedication to unbound passions and sensuous enlightenment. For the Aesthetes the moral and aesthetic influence was Baudelaire; who had one pondered the meaning of Romanticism and concluded:

> To say the word Romanticism is to say modern art - that is, intimacy, spirituality, colour, aspiration, towards the infinite, expressed by every means available to the arts. (9)

Stressing the spiritual, the Symbolists agreed.

But despite the obvious divergent stances, links remain. Even Courbet's inversion of the pure Romantic emphasis on the

primacy of the free artistic personality does not deny a retained grip on the legacy of autonomy. Neither does it counter the claim that the artistic perception, standing in whatever relationship to social reality, is superior to others. These qualities have remained strong currents within the social psychology of artistic practice - to strong to be easily evaded. In their historical appropriation and specific reworkings they've contributed to the image of the artist John Berger calls 'something between a spiv, a funny eccentric and a holy hermit in the desert.'(10) They survived Dada and Surrealism's attempts to restructure the politics of aesthetics around the erroneous belief that Fine Art and poetic practice were as central to the construction of cultural worldviews as they had been a century before.

But even this interlude, flawed by a mishandling of the art/culture dialectic, was a desperate attempt to make art 'modern' and thus claim its stake in contemporary cultural practice. In the refusal to permit the public entry to ringside seats at the circus we see again the fear of external contamination handed-down from times when the threat was more tangibly hostile. As Renato Poggioli states in The Theory of the Avant-Garde:

> It is exactly the bohemian spirit and the psychology of the milieu artiste that determine and provoke all the external manifestations of avant-garde antagonism toward the public. Such manifestations occur in the areas of contact between society and the artist's world. (11)

But the bohemian tradition of creative distancing from the pernicious influences of contemporary culture did not survive the affluent society. The 1950s and early '60s possessed a

literary coterie of young authors whose presented anti-heroes, as in Osborne, Kingsley Amis, John Wain, were brashly declaring there were no good causes worth fighting anymore. At least none that were sensible. The period saw the emergence of a pattern, still engagingly in evidence, where legions of 6th form students could be seen shambling to school carrying dog-eared copies of Camus, Sartre and Kafka, lost in a self-indulgent existential haze. And with the same lack of discrimination between the sensitive and the senseless.

Fred Orton and Griselda Pollock succinctly capture the driving motive power behind the '30s avant-garde:

> The avant-garde withdrew from both bourgeois and anti-bourgeois politics in order to keep culture alive and developing independent of extraneous directives from external masters. (12)

Bohemian avant-gardes in general had created themselves, crucially by a series of attempts at distancing-moves away from the mainstream of bourgeois cultural production. But in a world where the material realities of affluence appeared to overshadow the less acceptable ideological undercurrents - in other words, where the delights of increases in real disposable income and the availability of consumer goods blinded the working-class to what the Left, to an increasingly smaller audience, protested was a culture rife with myths and undiminished inequalities of wealth - who could blame the Fine Artists if they buried their heads in an idealistically bankrupt conceptual sandpit or uncritically celebrated the turning of the social roundabout? Even if artists <u>wanted</u> to offend in the time-honoured tradition, what were they to do? In a situation in which the ludicrous is instantly gratefully embraced by the institutions of the art

establishment, it becomes difficult to maintain more than a shallow pretence of refusal.

But perhaps such movements as Pop Art were only celebrating what seemed the final realisation that Fine Art had lost its cultural potency: its meanings were not only those derived from an increasingly solid investment value, but contemporary art was not arguing the case very convincingly.

The above is a brief summary of the tone of my general argument, and shows the contribution of bohemianism towards the received definitions of artistic practice culturally-dominant in the 1960s. In other words, and in terms of the more specific concerns of the last chapter, it provides an overview of the varied and conflicting ideological strands impregnating both the popular image of what 'working as an artist' meant, and the more complex processes defining the nature of artistic practice within the institutional structure of art education in Britain. Where a relatively stable perception of artistic practice - conceived through the imagery of the Romantic 'exception' - confronted a changing institutional structure uncertain either of its material role within an advanced capitalist society or of its ideological attitude to the teaching and transmission of artistic 'knowledge', then conflict was the first dish on the menu. One ingredient in the recipe was the general availability of art education.

We can perhaps agree with Paul Overy's sentiments, stated in a brief review of recent trends in the practice of art in a 1978 issue of Art Monthly, which argues the 'proletarianisation' of the art schools in the immediate post-war years represented a

positive post-school alternative to the indelibly elitist and meritocratic university system for working-class youth and the not so youthful (ex-servicemen whose career and job routines had been disrupted by the war) in search of new areas of success. Certainly, the structure of the NDD allowed for the positive extension of artistic practice into realms of thought and application not incommensurate with either working-class experience or working-class aspiration. And we can agree with the tone if not the strict historical accuracy of the comment 'every small town had its art school'. As he goes on to state:

> There are far more art schools per head of the population in Britain (and especially England) than anywhere else in the world.(13)

This was the base level of the art education reality throughout the 1950s: its wide, and perhaps even generous desire to extend its boundaries. And then, of course, came Coldstream.

But even before the Coldstream proposals brought a state of incontinence to the art school administrators, anomalies within the existing system were broadly identifiable. One instance was the worrying contrast in motivations between the Fine Art and the Design students. As Tony Frye states in a recent issue of Block, the contrast was and is one

> between the aims of the art student which are, generally, to acquire and fulfill the 'role of artist', and the aims of the design student which is often to work and live tastefully with, of course, a good income from the sale of 'services'.(14)

Perhaps the majority of design students could assimilate easily to a productive system geared, certainly by the mid 1950s, to a bolder, more explicitly 'modern' concept of industrial and

consumer design: to creating a culture modelled, perhaps, on the dreams of the Festival of Britain and according to the whimsical visions of Harold Macmillan. For the Fine Art students, however, the prospect of the 'proletarianisation' of the art schools had more sinister connotations. And at a base level of argument again, the problem was logistical. As Berger remarked in the 1950s:

> The position of the art student today is almost untenable, both logically and practically..... Their position is logically untenable because they are being trained - nominally at least - to be painters and sculptors for whose work there doesn't begin to be any adequate demand.(15)

The practical problems, those Berger ascribes to the inadequacy of the student grant, need not concern me here as they sweep across the board of the student population (or so the NUS annually tells governments' deaf ears). Potentially more serious is the numbers game. Drawn by the image of Romantic art, perhaps even attracted by the poverty models of past bohemian existence, the aspiring Fine Artist is lured into a beckoning trap. The 'role of artist' is waiting, and for the three or four years of art school is readily assumed. But then the problems begin.

Even if it is assumed, as the research of Madge and Weinberger amongst others would tend to suggest, that few Fine Art students are seriously troubled by the uncertain prospects of finding careers comparable in status and remuneration to their design-oriented contemporaries, the problem still remains of convincing oneself of the attractive, 'successful' qualities of commercial failure. Can you really <u>live</u> the life of deprivation and excess of Verlaine, Rimbaud, Rossetti, Courbet and others which history

has tinged with the heroism of Romanticism? Celebrated now, and not in the slightest concerned with their legacy of the personal existential crisis, such artists continue to be the model for the 'role of artist'.

Then, of course, there's the problem of market penetration. for those artists who realise the futility of conjoining 'heroic failure' and commercial success. But if the only logical alternative to unheroic failure (even a variety containing the doubtful attractions of future, usually posthumous 'discovery') is commercial success, how is this to be achieved in an artistic market made proletarian in a different sense to that used by Overy? Even in the silly season of British art (limited, in terms of this work, to the '50s and '60s, although possibly indefinitely extendable), when the critical establishment appeared willing to label anything 'Art' (and thus automatically define the perpetrator as 'Artist') that could be levered, poured or dragged bodily through an art gallery's tradesman's entrance, success (or its synonym in art, notoriety) only accrues to him who places the first order with the London Brick Company or Tampax. Whatever Benjamin or Berger may say, it remains a truth that the major clue to the essence of artistic value, in a Romantic as well as a financial sense, is its uniqueness: when defined as a first order symbol of cultural fashionability, there are no prizes for the artist coming second; for creating a style ten days or even ten minutes after somebody else. One attempt to resolve this 'problem situation' will be discussed in the counter-culture 'solutions' seen in the next chapter.

So even the relatively innocuous, and certainly pleasurable

pasttime of shocking bourgeois sensibilities becomes no easy task. Access to the boot is often as awkward as access to Bond Street. The problem, translated to the more impersonal realm of that ever problematical cultural signification system, is cornered if not captured by Fred Orton and Griselda Pollock in their assessment of Clement Greenberg's 1930s' deliberations on the distinction between avant-garde and kitsch:

> ....the spectator must react to an impression left by plastic or formal qualities. The ultimate sympathetic values, however, are derived at a second remove: they are the result of reflection upon that immediate impression and must be projected into the painting by the spectator as part of a reaction to the formal qualities. This second level of response is called the '"reflected" effect'. With kitsch the '"reflected" effect' is already included, available to, or for, the spectator's easy enjoyment and passive consumption. Kitsch is ersatz culture; it uses the debased and academicised simulcra of the mature cultural tradition as a resevoir for its tricks and strategems. (16)

Which largely translates to the view that the 'sensitive' consumer no more likes viewing second-hand goods, in a conventional sense, than does the 'exceptional' artist, declared avant-gardist or otherwise, tolerate producing them.

But the point again is that the unsympathetic and relentless mechanisms of the capitalist art market rarely tolerates, itself, in the first instance or with the benefit of critical hindsight, the historical also-rans. A situation that could only be exacerbated by the simultaneous expansion of the supply of trained Fine Artists, whether committed to a Romantic, 'bourgeois' model of artistic practice or not, and the increasingly uncertain and unfavourable social conditions and definitions of Fine Art practice to which both Fuller and Berger refer.

Peter Fuller states of the period of artistic transition in the 17th century as when 'visual practice was suspended in a vacuum between aristocratic patronage and an open market. "Art" and artists had yet to come into being.'(17) He rightly argues that the practice of art as we now conceive it only truly materialised with the emergence of the open market, the rise of the national academic institutions, and the wider sense of art becoming a 'public' enterprise. The problem in the 1950s and '60s was that the 'professionalism' of art had lost its directiona sense: caught in a radical chic wave of Fashion, the received definitions of artistic practice were becoming effectively more fluid in their critical translation: certainly the prospects for the creative 'distancing' of art from the confines of bourgeois culture were becoming increasingly more difficult to maintain.

How did this situation influence the lower levels of the hierarchy of artistic practice, the art schools? Possibly it could only influence the teaching structure - the bearer of the professional ethic - in a profoundly negative, inhibiting manner. In his essay The Debilitation of the British Art School, Michael Daley suggests that lurking threateningly in the mists of the Dip.AD reforms that demarcated the '50s and the '60s was the spectre of fear:

> ....the nervousness, if not panic, of Art School heads fighting for recognition led frequently to an uneasy embracing of then current fashions (minimalism, conceptualism, abstract expressionism, 'event art', etc.). The great flaw in the upheaval was that in order to move from centralised examinations to school-determined ones, heads had to meet the (real or imagined) tastes of centrally-appointed, London-dominated authority and had to do so in the knowledge that the change-over was, simultaneously, to be the occasion of a severe pruning of Art Schools.(18)

In practical terms, then, the fears of impending rationalisation enforced a doctrine endorsing the standardisation of artistic philosophies within the Fine Art departments: quite the opposite effect of the diversification ostensibly supported by the original proposals for reform. In the face of any proposed systematic rationalisation (the bureaucratic euphemism for a more cost-effective system), it's only the brave man or the fool who back the form underdog: who endorses a structure out of step with contemporary ideologies. And Daley's point is that the art schools jockying for position in the valuable Dip.AD stakes were populated by administrators committed to backing the favourite. His conclusion - that this dogmatism inevitably resulted in a steady flow of artistically incompetent and cynically misguided art school graduates unable to discriminate between the authentic and the absurd, is perhaps unfair, even as the polemical generalisation it is intended to be.

But as a general remark capable of translation to the setting of teaching practice in the wake of the Coldstream reforms, the point of standardisation must be taken. When the demands and assertions of the Hornsey students are remembered, we see the centrality of the concern that artistic practice should retain its creative autonomy; should state again the virtues of change, even 'higher purpose' over staid conventionalism and the demands of a repressive culture - standardisation implies external control of both the purse strings and the practical and ideological activity of life in the art school itself. Design students may have accepted the career structures offered by the colleges and a productive system hungry for aesthetic innovation, but there was a suspicion of the deeper cultural use value of a

design education conceived solely in these terms. Fine Art students questioned any form of subordination. Art training should not uncritically feed industry; nor should the vocational courses, which existed alongside the more academic Dip.AD courses, provide mindless fodder for what was seen as a mass culture. If the artist was to be a social animal at all, his instincts, and thus his responsibilities, should echo those espoused by Courbet, Morris and Ruskin. In other words he must possess a reflexive social consciousness, one unwilling to shed the powers of its individuality.

This quality of individuality was central to the desires of the art student because it was central to the Romantic, bohemian ideology pervading art education's institutional structure. In that ideology's history, even with Ruskin and Morris, where the aesthetic cult of the lone personality was discouraged in favour of a collective responsibility, there was no rejection of individual creativity. Even Dada, which thought it signalled the end of the myth of creativity, fought many of its battles as a loosely-assembled circle of rather highly-strung individuals. For it's reality rather than myth that the artistic, creative enterprise has been historically defined as an individualistic, peculiarly and not always obviously 'inner' practice; what's myth is the associated belief that this independent individual strength could always overcome the collective forces of the wider society.(19)

But in the context of the real, we can see the relevance of comments by Rosemary Burton, herself an art teacher:

> You ask me whether art can be taught. If art were

> merely decoration or the production of artifacts then, yes, art could be taught, but learning calligraphy does not make anyone a creative writer. True artists are in the end self-taught, for the work has its origins in the struggle with one's own being. So an art school should provide the conditions in which the student is most likely to discover himself or herself. (20)

Such a claimed reality may be distasteful illusion to the bulk of Marxist social historians of art but it was real to many students intimately involved with the practical activity of art. And it was this quasi-spiritual element of free artistic practice, leading beyond the basic ability to discover which end of the brush to dip in the paint, which seemed threatened by the Coldstream regime as it materialised. The Basic Design component - which had heralded the introduction of such creative, innovatory and personality-expanding exercises as 'taking a successive-dimensional model towards logical conclusions' - had become a repetitive and stifling orthodoxy, and, as Dick Field notes, generally taught by people whose background 'is more likely to be university than college of art'.(21) The Complementary Studies element, demanded by the Coldstream notion of degree-equivalence, had imposed a system of academic rationality onto a practice which many of those most intimately concerned with demanded was neither rational nor academic. But then, as Norbert Lynton noted in Studio International in 1969:

> The Coldstream system had to be sold to people who had little thought of needing art schools, let alone of digging into their pockets for better building, better equipment and an exceptionally favourable student/staff ratio. So it had to include a few educational symbols which they would recognise. (22)

The unconvincing refusal of the 1970 Joint Report of the NACAE and NCDAD to apportion blame for the student troubles to the

existing system of art education cannot disguise the fact that the revolts in the art schools in 1968 were a direct and profound expression of dissatisfaction with the social relations of art as they then existed. Lynton, himself unconvinced of the link between the Dip.AD system and the art school revolt, could further note that 'the better Dip.AD schools in this country, meaning those not overly burdened with self-imposed fears, are the most open-minded, open-ended places in the world.'(23) And in respect of the general working relationship between staff and students, joined in a common cause, there is the ring of truth in such a comment. But, and a considerable reservation at that, the dissatisfaction was with a system which, in its forced attempts at rationalisation (only the latest in the historical progression of attempts at restructuring and rethinking), had become nationally and locally trapped under the weight of bureaucratic interest stifling openness.

Naturally this was in the interests of the administrators and, moreover, seemed demonstrably well suited to the needs of what many contemporary critics, in the style of Horkheimer and Adorno, liked to refer to as the culture industry. The long struggle for a system of art and design education that 'fitted' the demands of a capitalist economy and culture had been successfully negotiated.

But this success could only conflict with the historically-grounded ideology - of the fundamental creative autonomy of art and its inalienable right to distance itself from cultural and social demands - which had survived previous attempts on its power and influence. The reforms to the system instigated by Coldstream and enforced by Summerson brought to the surface

and then concentrated forces which were resolute in their criticism of such ideological and material imposition. If the threatened merger of the art schools with the proposed Polytechnic structure was the straw that put the camel in traction, it occurred on a sound foundation of discontent with levels of participation, the relevance and practical functioning of the Complementary Studies element of the Dip.AD courses and, of course, the constant undercurrent of unease, particularly among the idiosyncratic Fine Art students, about what they were being educated for. And whether such an education was even possible in the first place.

Conflicting ideologies about the essential nature of the artistic enterprise clashed in the material context of state-initiated reform. The ideology of creative autonomy confronted an ideology demanding, not always clearly, economic and educational rationality - a conventional way of seeing. The right to 'work for one's living by living in one's work', which attracted many students to art school in the first place with its promise of a viable alternative to both working-class and middle-class definitions of work and leisure, was under threat along with visions of freedom, creativity and purpose. They always had been of course, which is the point of my history.

The critique offered, dressed in the stylised language and rhetoric of the late '60s, was conducted according to the rules of Romanticism's dialogue with an antagonistic social reality. The concerns the students raised about the social purpose of art and design education and all it entailed brought the Romantic critique up to date. As an ideological style, assessing and contriving the alternative culture of art, it raised the

dormant spirit of bohemianims in its attempt to restate the centrality of artistic practice to the necessity of cultural life. The bohemian, counter-cultural response of the artists has never appeared magically 'from nowhere': it has always been structured by a war of aesthetics between artists committed to the radical edge of Romantic ideology and the antagonistic conventionalism of capitalist art's institutions. Romanticism at the most basic historical level defines both modern art and the modern age in its problems and solutions: the threat of revolution as chaos, replacement, disruption confronts the need for revolution as the vital mechanism of economic and cultural modernity. Echoing the sentiments of Bernice Martin from an earlier chapter, the Romantic artistic attitude is inherently counter-cultural in its stress on 'anti-structure': in the institutional organisation of art, Romanticism and capitalist rationality have carried on a battle of worldviews for two centuries.

With this mode of analysis in mind my intention now is to return to the 'hippie' aspect of the late '60s British counter-cultural moment from the point where worldview theories left off and which Centre theory never approached. The basic proposition, then, is that the British hippie counter-culture or Underground cannot be understood except as an up-dated version of bohemianism; that the concerns of this face of the counter-culture during this 'moment' were those bohemianism has consistently associated with problems of artistic practice; and that the stylistic and ideological themes of the counter-culture in 1967 and 1968 must be read as revised forms of bohemian artistic solutions. This is the way the problems of artistic creativity and production mentioned throughout the second section of this thesis so far

link directly into the analysis of the hippie style of cultural protest. In their language, their ideology of work and leisure, their heroes, and their attempts to redefine the aesthetics of politics in pursuit of the aesthetic redefinition of culture - in these alternative qualities the hippies were both bohemians and artists. When the references to Marcuse, Mcluhan, Laing and the rest have passed safely into the realm of academic folklore the hippie counter-culture will be remembered for its theatre, its posters and visual effects, its dance and poetry, and perhaps especially for its magazines and its music. It was in these areas, particularly the last two, that the visions of the romance of the artistic life were articulated and eulogised. It was here that the counter-culture's own institutional base worked through the imagery and concerns of the artistic, mainly Fine Art Romantic tradition: the romance of Fine Art's history has proved the most accessible store of reference, inspiration and ideology: and in the case of popular music's role in cultural aesthetics, provided material links in both the 'problem situation' and the 'solution'.

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17. Fuller, 1980, p.47
18. Daley, 1979
19. Perhaps we can agree, however, with the shift in the nature of the art/society dichotomy argued in Williams' The Long Revolution (p32)

    Romantic - Man - Natural Seeing - Reality
    Artist - Exceptional Seeing - Superior Reality

    Modern - Man - Natural Seeing - Reality
    Artist - Exceptional Seeing - Art

    ....acceptable with the proviso that 'Art' is still superior to the 'Reality' of the common man! At least for the artists.
20. Burton, 1977
21. Field, 1970,p.94
22. Lynton, Studio International, 1969
23. ibid.

CHAPTER TWELVE

> American society is the one in which the great questions of our time will be first tested through practice
>
> Zbigniew Brzezinski.

> The Beats rejected. They vomited up the American dream and left the mess quivering on the floor for the world to walk around.
>
> Bruce Cook, The Beat Generation.

> ....Neville just doesn't convince me that tinkering with lifestyle and an occasional brush with the police amounts to a revolution. Behind all the scream crash and wallop the underground still smells of cheque books and an expensive education.
>
> David Widgery, Oz, no.26

> What would happen if the white ideological left group took power: Communist Party, Trotskyites, Progressive Labour, Independent Socialists, Outer Mongolian Proletarian Internationalists and the rest of the alphabet soup?
> The hippie streets would be the first cleaned up by 'socialist' pigs. We'd be forced to get haircuts and shaves every week. We'd have to bathe every night, and we'd go to jail for saying dirty words.
>
> Jerry Rubin, DO IT!

The other side of the late '60s bohemian counter-culture is more directly tied to the popular image of hippie youth culture: the sense in which the counter-culture created its own cultural institutions and offered alternative social definitions in an attempt to articulate the aesthetics of cultural revolution to a more general audience. In other words the way the ideologies, the themes, the style of bohemian refusal were worked into a wider reappraisal of the media of cultural expression. One of

the hippie counter-culture's most distinctive features was that its use of the media and media institutions revolved around attitudes to artistic form, artistic practice, and bohemian artistic ideologies. The counter-culture's media form represented both a revised solution to the problems worked out in the institutional context (education, the market) of the struggle over Art and Culture and a determined wider experimentation with the artistic solution. This is the sense in which the 'problem situation' of the counter-culture was the artistic, even the art school experience: the sense in which the 'solution' went into the areas of a wider popular culture.

This is not to say, of course, that all hippies were art students: statements of this type can be left safely in the hands of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies. But the links between the 'artistic experience' and the 'hippie solution' are real and tangible; at a more positive level than the metaphorical conjunction some other analyses have argued. The British counter-culture's institutional style both flowed 'naturally' from the institutional history of bohemian ideology, and represented a way in which a wider involvement, of those not necessarily tied to such a context, could consciously seize bohemian ideology's stresses (on work, leisure, creativity, market relations etc.) and offer them to a wider audience through attempts to redefine certain popular media forms. From this point of view, then, artistic ideology and artistic practice represented both the 'problem' and the 'solution': together they were the 'natural setting' and the chosen path.

But the problem immediately arises for anyone half familiar with the realities of 1967 and 1968: if the British counter-

culture emerged, at both levels of analysis, as a specific blend of artistic ideologies and themes drawing on the colourful rhetoric and styles of bohemianism's earlier attempts to redefine culture aesthetically, what sense can be made of the very real, and more general American influence? Anyone old enough to remember 1967 must recall the vapid Scott Mackenzie summoning the world's youth to join the pilgramage to the Summer of Love in San Francisco. But how does the influence of Haight-Ashbury equate with the specificity of the British cultural context?

As my argument so far implies, I believe that in certainly not arriving 'from nowhere', neither could there be a simple sense of ideological derivation from the American hippie counter-culture. The popular assumption that readily translates Haight-Ashbury to Piccadilly Circus, while pointing with some justification to the emergence of a world-wide hippie youth phenomenon in 1967 and '68, ignores that the language, style and ideology of the British counter-culture, like its American counterpart, was articulated through a set of relatively specific cultural institutions; and both had their own history. The world was not quite yet Mcluhan's. Despite the obvious similarities between the two forms, a wholesale translation of the style reveals a far too uncritical reliance on the strengths of a 'worldview' account of cultural sensibilities.

More realistically the significance of the American hippie scene for the British counter-culture lies at the level of the 'borrowing' of certain youth cultural symbols rather than a direct importation of solid ideologies. The penetration of the American counter-culture into its British parallel was at the

level of a form of catalyst, providing images - a revised style of cultural language and cultural reference points rather than a pre-mixed cultural ideology - for the stylistic modernisation of elements of the British counter-cultural tradition.

> All over the world people were in love with the life of the American teenager. It was so much freer than it was anywhere else. Anything the young wanted to do they would do in an automobile. On saturday nights the drive-in was the automobile meeting ground where carloads of boys and girls would do anything from picking up each other to picking a fight.
>
> Tom Wolfe.

The power of American cultural imagery over the whole of western culture has continued to increase, throughout the twentieth century. Certainly by the 1950s years of post-war uncertainty the rest of the world looked longingly to the United States to see what was <u>really</u> happening, to see what was <u>new</u>, what was <u>stylish</u>. While western Europe was attempting the painful process of social and economic reconstruction, with the subsidy of American aid, and while Britain was suffering the freeze of austerity under the puritanical asceticism of Sir Stafford Cripps, in America Design, consumption and just a general sense of 'living were given a free hand, offering tantalising images of what life could really be like. As the art world already knew, New York had replaced Paris as the world's cultural capital.

Peter Lewis states about the 1950s:

> The roaring of the American boom rang round the Western world where everyone in every hard-pressed country saw the new world as an Aladdin's cave of American goods, American entertainment and the American style of living. (1)

America was the material epitome of capitalist modernisation and the symbolic paradigm of cultural modernity. Unlike the style of European consumption, the aesthetics of American modernity thrived on the brash, the arrogant and the ostentatious. At the forefront of the spectacle, in an age of little concern for either the cost or preservation of fossil fuels, was the Dodge, the Buick, the Chevrolet and the Cadillac. With every yearly-new model more ridiculously spectacular, not to say larger than the model it replaced, the American automobile dream-reality captured the imagination of every European child, and every adult then content, at best, with the austerity of a Ford Popular, a Citroen 2CV or a VW Beetle. As a child in the late '50s I remember sitting entranced behind the wheel of a 1957 Buick owned an American serviceman living two or three doors away in the street. This was the world of Harley Earl, General Motors' chief designer, whose mission seemed to be to turn American streets into airport runways.

This process of wishful cultural identification was not new. It had certainly been in action from the time a vivid Hollywood imagination gripped the wider world's imagination in the 1930s. And it was consolidated, in the traumatic terms of a more direct experience, with the invasion of American servicemen in Britain during the last four years of the Second World War. As Dick Hebdige states in Towards a Cartography of Taste 1935-1962:

> The first direct experience of American popular culture for most 'ordinary' Britons occurred during the war through informal contact with American servicemen stationed on British bases.(2)

When the GIs had gone, taking many brides with them but leaving at least as many broken hearts and unwanted pregnancies behind, the Anglo-American cultural relationship resorted back to the more subdued, vicarious level of symbolic adoration and identification; despite the active filtering of American images by, in Hebdige's words, the 'BBC and the literary and artistic establishments'.

But despite such attempted censorship, as British austerity became affluence, and as European consumerism caught up in part with the early start of America, elements of the American dream became transatlantic High Street reality as the '50s became the '60s.

In an earlier chapter I noted the angst which gripped the British radical conscience as affluence arrived: in a similar vein the new American invasion was greeted with cries of horror from the self-appointed guardians of the traditional culture of the British working-class. Once 'over-paid, over-sexed and over here' troops, the invasion was now one of ten-pin bowling lanes, strange styles of dress and speech, hamburger parlours and milk bars - the seemingly innocuous qualities of the latter being sufficient to throw the otherwise stout-hearted Richard Hoggart into a state of apoplexy in 1957:

> Compared even with the pub around the corner, this is all a peculiarly thin and pallid form of dissipation, a sort of spiritual dry-rot amid the odour of boiled milk. Many of the customers - their clothes, their hair-styles, their facial expressions all indicate - are living to a large extent in a myth-world compounded by a few simple elements which they take to be those of American life. (3)

Only a few people like Richard Hamilton and the Pop Artists, and the mass of the people voraciously consuming the new goodies

of affluence seemed satisfied. The journalist Christopher Booker, in a highly readable 'spirit of the age' account of the 1960s, captures the prevalent contemporary thoughts on how, where and on what the style of consumption was based:

> ....the extraordinary infectiousness of the imagery of America, seen in everything from the supermarkets to the adoption of an Americanised vocabulary, from rock 'n' roll to the introduction of one-armed bandits, was a recognition of the fact that, owing to the accident of America having pioneered so many of the techniques of a modern mass society, the American Dream has grown up throughout the twentieth century into the most potent 'vitality image' in the world - and it is therefore the example of America which any country wishing to escape into the modern dream must follow. (4)

At the centre of both marketing intention and anguished moralism was youth: imported alongside the tangible, material elements of the American lifestyle was the concept of 'the teenager' - a state simultaneously envied and feared by all those not in the magical age range. Envied for his or her unprecedented free time and amount of disposable income, the teenager was popularly associated with a degree of freedom wider and more immediate in its possibilities than anything before: the teenager was 'the conspicuous consumer par excellence.'(5) Declared officially extinct in the 1970s, the working-class teenage phenomenon was the child of affluence, consumerism and full youth employment.

But the envy of a life seemingly free of the rigours of military service and the restraints of traditional financial and family responsibility was shadowed by a concern that youth's consumption of the benefits of Britain's hard-earned degree of affluence lacked the mannered, responsible morality of earlier generations: as the 'teenager' was an American concept so the

fear was that the youth activity to which it was attached in Britain was adopting looser and more self-confidently arrogant American overtones.(6) Two notable novels, one from 1959 the other from 1962, express different elements of an older and wiser society's dread.

Anthony Burgess' A Clockwork Orange offers a nightmare future world where the germs of decay of traditional values seen by many in the mass culture of affluence are taken to an extreme end. The novel predicts or anticipates a future in which youthful individualism stands alone against the cold forces of mass social control and exploitation. In its statement that evil is at least a sign of existential life, the anti-hero of A Clockwork Orange stands closer to the style of Graham Greene's Brighton Rock than to the future depicted in Orwell's 1984. To risk eternal damnation by an antinomian morality is at least to affirm life and oppose the stultifying forces of bland and sterile conformity. And in this form of statement Burgess expresses elements of the moral panic surrounding the actual and potential violence of post-war teenage leisure. The fear was that the new youth culture would revel in a state of mindless and amoral violence, without cause or fear of social consequence: that, in the words of Alex, 'what I do I do because I like to do.'(7) When it came to 1950s and '60s realities of gang warfare, society didn't like it one bit.

The other, less drastic concern is depicted in Keith Waterhouse's Billy Liar. Billy, easily read as an urgent case for a psychiatrist's couch, looms large as a symbol of parental concern over the growing width of the generation gap. The

humour of the book is slanted in the more gentle tones of youth's supposed open ridicule of parents and elders, even when they're on its side. As described by Billy:

> Maurie was the owner of the XL Disc Bar at the top of the Arcade, a slight, dapper little man who looked like an Armenian. He was interested in youth work and all the rest of it, and was always going on about showing tolerance and treating everybody as adults. When we had nothing to do we would go in and bully him. 'Hey Maurie, this record's got all grooves in it'.(8)

Without Burgess' savagery, Waterhouse describes, and shares a concern for, the uniformity of the affluent society. In a short speech by Billy, youth's own sense of individualism, fantasy and anarchism is contrasted with the uniformity promoted by American culture and encouraged by the trivia of consumer affluence:

> Everybody I knew spoke in cliches, but Rita spoke as though she got her words out of a slot machine, whole sentences ready-packed in a disposable tin-foil wrapper.(9)

America and the American lifestyle, symbol of all that was 'modern' about the culture of the affluent society, also represented all that was morally reprehensible, bland and just plain bad. The one form of cultural influence that encompassed all elements of moral indignation and fear was music: the teenagers' bewildering willingness to turn their backs on Perry Como and Doris Day to embrace the more jarring tones of rock and roll.

If the affluent British working-class teenager discovered rock and roll as a more relevant basis for patterns of leisure activity - anything that could be done could be done more enjoyably to A, G and D played on a Les Paul - the guardians

of youth's moral fibre in the mid '50s saw its advance as a symbol of rebellion and disruption. The proof, it seemed, was indisputable as the teenage consumption market took off on the crest of affluence: Bill Haley's musical accompaniment to the American film Blackboard Jungle had sparked scenes of teddy boy frenzy; Jerry Lee Lewis not only frequently smashed pianos and swore at his band and audience alike, but also married his thirteen year old cousin; the transparent sexuality of Presley's groin produced traumas in television producers and parents alike; Chuck Berry's song School Day openly substituted youth's proper identity with the immediate forces of rock 'n' roll for the 'days of old' of work, school and parental control. And there was Johnnie Ray. Nik Cohn summarises the stage presence of the Nabob of Sob:

> Frail as he was, thin and deaf and sickly, his fans would be twisted into paroxysms of maternal hysteria by him, and they'd half kill him. All around, it was the kind of orgiastic exhibition that simply hadn't happened before, and it was entirely pop. The music wasn't; the atmosphere was.(10)

Etc., etc. through the cliches of rock's early history.

Despite the problems mentioned in my section on the Centre of attempting sociological readings of youth's use of music as both deviant and purely symbolic, parental concern in the late 1950s and early '60s came near to the truth on one crucial point: British youth culture was consciously appropriating the strains of rebellion, real or symbolic, offered in increasingly large and flamboyant doses by the American media. British rock 'n' roll produced its own heroes of teenage music leisure consumption with names (Steele, Fury, Wilde) if not deeds reflecting

the new 'hardness' of youth. And if not everybody could be James Dean or Marlon Brando, and if the physical hardness of British youth rebellion seemed a pale reflection of the New York of West Side Story, every kid worth his or her salt could at least dance, scream, buy records, dress up, and dream. And in the end, a young rock journalist, writing in 1969, captured the sociological and ideological nature of the teenage phenomenon as well as any contemporary practising sociologist:

> For thirty years, both in America and Britain, most working-class kids had come out of schools with a built-in sense of defeat. They might be headed for some dead-end job, they might be off to win wars, they might end up in bread lines. Whatever happened, they weren't going to have much fun. (11)

And as Cohn explains, in the 1950s and '60s fun seemed possible. It was the essentially new quality of teenage leisure, perhaps the one that frightened parents most.

And if we compare Cohn's comment to the dry, turgid, abstract theoreticism of youth's post-war leisure styles presented by the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, the rather depressing consequences for the sociology of youth culture are obvious. The indiscriminate appropriation by Tony Jefferson and Dick Hebdige, for example, of the Ted style, the first stylistic symptom of British post-war teenage culture, pales in its naive unresearched speculation before the studies of Chris Steele-Perkins and Richard Smith, and Jon Savage. Where the former are content to adhere to the broad stereotypes of popular culture's 'moral panic' memory, the latter depict the style's intricate and subtle changes from true 'Edwardians' of Guards Officers, through London gay circles, to working-class dandies

before it became the 'Ted' of rock 'n' roll, bike chains and cinema-seat slashing.(12)

The object of the above has been to show the continuing influence of the American image, the American style. The international success of the British music industry in the early 1960s notwithstanding - when the Beatles and Rolling Stones, and bands like the Dave Clark Five were instrumental in inverting, to some extent, the transatlantic cultural relationship - the formal style of rock music and patterns of rock consumption remained heavily influenced by transatlantic notions of what was 'cool', 'hip' or 'square'. The American style of youth culture may have developed as a direct borrowing of black styles (an argument put forcibly by Norman Mailer for America and less convincingly, for the British context, by Hebdige): white British youth judged itself against the yardstick of its American counterparts.

Returning to the more central and specific problem of accounting for the counter-culture it is in this sense, then, that the translation of certain elements of the hippie style of San Francisco to Britain was 'natural' - a consequence of a continuing process of youth cultural affiliation and identification. The British hippie counter-culture borrowed the language and visual style of youth rebellion. But more importantly it borrowed the modernised artistic rhetoric and media techniques, and the rediscovered realisation that building utopias could be both fun and creative.

This is not to subscribe to a loose 'worldview' theory: as

I've already stated, the British counter-culture needs to be read institutuionally in its appropriation of cultural symbols and their subsequent articulation through alternative cultural, essentially artistic media forms. In any case the debt is incurred in terms of an existing foundation of artistic and cultural problems and British and European traditions of bohemian solution. In this way the specificity of the British bohemian experience, its cultural and sociological autonomy from a swamping by a pervasive American 'spirit of the age' is retained. But what follows here, before I examine the actual bohemian aesthetics of the British counter-culture, is a brief summary of points from the post-war American counter-cultural tradition. If nothing else, it demonstrates that the stylistic transition of disaffected, rebellious youth from the concerns of the Beat Generation to the Summer of Love occurred through the re-working of aesthetic problems and solutions. What it will not offer is any detailed parallel institutional setting: the trajectory of American Romantic bohemianism presumably has its own history which has yet to be written.

> 'Like the Dadaists,' Cheevy slowly spoke, 'the beats wrote a few interesting books - influenced a few others - inspired a good dozen articles, created scandals and gossip, had a good ole time. They insulted the public, and perhaps our complacent res publica needed it. But they did nothing more. (13)

So states a character from Ed Sanders' fictional parody of the events and personalities of the Beat community centred on New York's Greenwich Village and Lower East Side in the late '50s and early '60s. According to Sanders the Beat Generation existed

in a 'Now' state of existential spontaneity; a lunatic fringe claiming (through an excessive identification with booze, drugs, sex, poetry, jazz, and anything that could be loosely called 'artistic') a direct descendancy from 'that Art-clogged river of the Cubists, Futurists, Vorticists, Imagists, Expressionists, Constructivists, Dadaists, Surrealists and action painters'. But although this claimed lineage is probably essentially correct as a facet of the Beat personality, and agrees with Jeff Nuttall's account of the artistic Beat community in Bomb Culture(14), the reality of Beat severance from contemporary cultural reality was possibly less bizarre than Sanders' attempts to define their bohemianism as the 'view from the edge'. Compared to the fevered mania of some earlier styles of bohemianism, the Beats in their attics and coffee bars represented a relatively gentle moment in the history of the delicate dialectic between artistic freedom and social responsibility. Perhaps their alignment was more towards the statement from a Beat favourite, Huxley's The Doors of Perception:

> To be enlightened is to be aware, always, of total reality in its immanent otherness - to be aware of it and yet remain in a condition to survive as an animal, to think and feel as a human being, to resort whenever expedient to systematic reasoning. (15)

The Doors in the Wall are there, and excess opens them, but the basis of the artistic commentary remains rooted in a state of tension rather than the wholesale rejection of cultural reality. The problem and the prognosis is put by William Carlos Williams in his introduction to Allen Ginsberg's early Beat manifesto, Howl:

> We are blind and live our blind lives out in blindness. Poets are damned but they are not blind, they see with the eyes of angels. This poet sees through and all around the horrors he partakes of in the very intimate details of his poem. He avoids nothing but experiences it to the hilt.(16)

But in the sense of how the 1950s would evolve into the 1960s, the earlier comments by Sanders are pertinent: New York, always possessed of a spirit of healthy cynicism, would yield the black humour mirror image of the counter-culture with Warhol's Silver Dream Factory and The Erupting Plastic Inevitable. Just as its art world contained the craziness viciously parodied by Tom Wolfe's The Painted Word. And musically, in the days of the early 1960s, the city's art was hard-nosed and penetrating: the young Bob Dylan could head to the Village in the safe assurance that its bars and coffee houses supported communities of folk and protest singers. A stream of folk artists like Hoyt Axton, Phil Ochs, Joni Mitchell and Judy Collins already plied their talents around the Cafe Wha?, the Gaslight, the Night Owl and the other cafés and bars of Greenwich Village - political and idealistic and committed, but humourless, hard and just ever-so-slightly cynical.

New York offered the slightly deranged world of Dadaesque bohemianism: the form of creative idealism that was to gell later into the hippie counter-cultural style had its home in the North Beach area of San Francisco.

From the mid 1950s, as Bruce Cook states with typical American candour in The Beat Generation, 'things were happening in San Francisco'. The poet Allen Ginsberg, having wandered the American university campuses spreading the word, settled near the City Lights bookshop which was already, under the ownership

and patronage of poet Lawrence Ferlinghetti, providing a meeting place and forum for artistic discussion. And the city possessed another important factor in its post-war development as thriving centre for disaffected artistic idealism: because of

> all the Conscientious Objectors who passed in and out of the city during the war. San Francisco was within hitchhiking distance of half the C.O. camps in America. They all came here - especially that bunch up in Waldport, Oregon. That was where they kept all the artists and special nuts. (17)

By 1958 and 1959 two American researchers, Francis J.Rigney and Douglas Smith could claim with some justification to have found their 'real bohemia' around the city's bars and beaches: not a youth culture composed, in their words, of 'juvenile delinquents', nor the craziness of Sanders' parodies or the middle-class 'arty' delinquency referred to by Nuttall, but a serious artistic community with a developed sense of its own purpose, history and limitations.

> The bohemians have been coming here for years. They continue to come: poets, painters, jazz musicians, camp followers; talented ones, lonely ones, sick ones; some really gifted, some qualifying as 'artists' only by the merciful judgements of their fellows. (18)

Far from being indolent, the common ties of the Beach community were a strong group identity, an obsessional dedication to art, and a sense of 'continuous productivity'. Like other bohemian communities we've encountered, their conscious decision to choose the artistic path as the foundation of a contained or wider cultural statement was tempered by the vicissitudes of supply and demand: 'most of the bohemians are poor for a simple

reason: there are no customers for their wares.'(19) Even if financial success was fairly assured, as with Kerouac and Ginsberg, critical acclaim from the American literary, artistic establishment was rarely forthcoming in its generosity: as Bruce Cook states, when it came to questions of orthodoxy and critical taste, they continued to be 'ridiculed, reviled and scoffed at'(20

But despite the problems, the bohemian coteries of North Beach were where the Beat Generation of Kerouac and Ginsberg found its spiritual home; as a place where the pursuit of creativity to satisfy the demands of 'the self' could be collectively indulged. By the late '50s California even had its own Café Society.(21) Plus it had its climate. Whereas New York was the symbol for the world's adoration of modern city life, the Californian coast offered a different kind of appeal, one celebrated for over a hundred years and updated by songs such as Chuck Berry's The Promised Land. California offered the best of the modernised American dream still tinged with the attractions of a more simple age. In music, the best American pure pop of the early '60s reinforced the image of the automobile dream: but it did it in a location where sun-tanned girl outnumbered muscular boys two to one, where surfing and beach parties were endless activities, and where the teenage never grew old, fat and married. The clean-cut, high-school fun of Brian Wilson's lyrics, the All-American wholesome appeal of the Beach Boys themselves, may have been far removed from the vagrant bohemian flights of Kerouac's characters, but the sense of California as representing something magnetic, positive and special in the American dream was shared. New York was the

protest of Bob Dylan: California was the Coca-Cola, surf-board innocence of Fun Fun Fun and cruising the freeways as much as the bohemian artistic insularity of the Beat Generation with its commitment to the less accessible rhythms of jazz and folk.

But by the mid-sixties the innocence of West Coast pop was disappearing along with the established subdued 'hip' of Californian Beat bohemian. In Tom Wolfe's colourful prose, 'North Beach was nothing but tit shows.'(22) And on one level the decay signalled that the hip was preparing to turn into the hippie: the seriousness of Beat bohemian artistic concerns was about to transform into the more good-time, fun idealistic creativity of the Haight-Ashbury hippie community. Many of the people were the same, and the ideologies of artistic significance and cultural criticism remained embedded in the new counter-cultural imagination: what was changing was the style of expression: the production and consumption of the art of cultural and aesthetic refusal, its basic definition, and the form of the politics of cultural disaffection. They needed modernisation. Again in Wolfe's words:

> The whole old-style hip life - jazz, coffee houses, civil rights, invite a spade for dinner, Vietnam - it was all suddenly dying, I found out, even among the students at Berkeley, across the bay from San Francisco, which had been at the heart of the 'student rebellion' and so forth.(23)

The Beat style's dependence on an amalgam of creative catalysts was being replaced by the hippie discovery of the wonder, all-purpose drug LSD: a crucial element in the transition from the cool literary assumptions of the Beat Generation to the loud, colourful, overwhelmingly visual creativity of the new style. Drugs remained the key to the door of the powers of 'the self',

the 'inner experience', but the acid trip was a more powerful, more immediate and more creative experience than booze or even the marihuana high. And not insignificantly, because of its generally more dangerous connotations, LSD represented a more certain demarcation of boundaries between 'hip' and 'square'. In the words of Timothy Leary, the psychedelic experience meant 'you are really seeing for the first time'. Unlike Speed for instance, which Ginsberg declared as not only bad for the mind and body but 'in the long run uncreative', LSD heightened sensual experience and offered a new illumination of reality. And Leary, self-styled High Priest of Psychedelia, could defend acid as a creative tool, a drug for 'doing' rather than one promoting a state of inactivity and soporific passivity:

> The hippie movement, the psychedelic style, involves a revolution in our concepts of art and creativity which is occurring right before our eyes. The new music, the new poetry, the new visual art, the new film. (24)

Despite the good doctor's own pretensions, it's difficult to assess the significance of Leary's brand of the church of LSD on the formation of the American hippie counter-culture. LSD was certainly crucial in the transition from the Beat Generation to the hippies, but was Leary? Rolling Stone journalist and one-time musician and dope dealer Charles Perry, recalling the Gathering of the Tribes in 1967, casts more than subdued doubts on the guru's rank-and-file credibility amongst the assembled:

> It was a giddy high. Except the puzzling thought: what were we doing here? Was this a political demonstration? A religious gathering? A party?... On a low stage, barely visible to most of the crowd, a series of speakers were apparently trying to remind us what we were there for. The PA system wasn't very good and it was hard to

> make out what was being said. When we squeezed our way up front we found it was only some middle-aged creep named Timothy Leary telling us - us! - to turn on, tune in and drop out. Absurd. (25)

Similarly, Tom Wolfe doubts the importance of the 'solemn-faced and esoteric' Leary to the formation of the style itself. According to Wolfe, the key moment of transformation belongs not to Leary or his associate Alpert but to the Kerouac-style, post-Beat wanderings of Ken Kesey's Merry Pranksters. And however much Wolfe's exaggerated New Journalism may get under the skin (with me, it doesn't), he has consistently maintained a finger accurately monitoring the pulse of American popular culture. Driving through California in a 1930s multi-coloured bus driven, or more accurately piloted by Kerouac's friend Neal Cassady, adorned with Day-Glo masks, and preaching the gospel of creative madness rather than religious experience, the Pranksters were the agents of stylistic change. Wolfe has no doubts that their Acid Tests 'were one of those outrages, one of those scandals, that create a new style, or a new worldview.'(26) All the significant elements of what was later to solidify as the hippie style of Haight-Ashbury during 1966 and '67 were the products of two years of constant agitation by Kesey's crew. The art, the music, the sense that being creative and unleashing the powers of the inner self under drugs could be acts of anarchic fun - all came in a solid line of influence from Kesey:

> The Acid Tests were the epoch of the psychedelic style and practically everything that has gone into it. I don't mean merely that the Pranksters did it first but, rather, that it all came straight out of the Acid Tests in a direct line leading to the Trips Festival of January, 1966. That brought the whole thing full out into the open. 'Mixed

> media' entertainment - this came straight out of the Acid Tests' combination of light and movie projections, strobes, tapes, rock 'n' roll, black light, 'Acid Rock' - the sound of the Beatles' Sergeant Pepper album and the high-vibrato electronic sounds of the Jefferson Airplane, the Mothers of Invention and many other groups - the mothers of it all were the Grateful Dead at the Acid Tests. (27)

The Trips Festival signalled the beginnings of one of the hippie counter-culture's major institutional innovations and achievements: through the festival form the creative art of the leaders of the movement could be celebrated, affirmed and renewed collectively and to an extent spontaneously. Again the process was one of artistic redefinition; both in terms of production and audience consumption and participation - the whole thing was just one large, extravagant, mobile, animated work of art. Even the posters advertising the music and mixed-media festivals were valuable, symbolic, celebratory masterpieces.(28) At the festivals themselves everyone was a work of art: taking time on make-up; getting that Indian silk scarf in just the right position; contriving the 'idiot dancing' to just the proper degree; becoming positively and actively involved. Everyone was an artist, so naturally formal divisions between musician/producer and audience/consumer were in danger of collapse. Lou Adler stated of the 1967 Monterey festival, 'every performer said he or she felt as if he or she were getting a performance in return from the audience. It was magical, and it became a total environment.'(29) At the level of the style of American youth culture, rebellion and hedonistic leisure were fused with more serious attempts at cultural and artistic redefinition. The barriers were breaking down, the rigid definitions of

performance and non-performance art collapsing, because everybody was involved in a united enterprise. Both musician and audience brought the same expectations, the same ideologies of leisure and art, the same hopes for cultural change to the festival arena. Both musicians and audience knew what they were doing; and they knew it was more advanced, far superior in cultural intent and artistic form to equivalent expressions in the prosaic straight world.

And music was by far the most powerful medium in this process, the strongest link in the American Underground's media chain of self-identification and cultural expression. Where the Beats had listened to and made jazz and then folk, the hippies listened to and made rock. Rock could be Art - a serious medium for communicating ideas - and the rock musician could legitimately claim the status of Artist - a serious communicator. Although I will be developing this redefinition in more depth later in this chapter, for the American hippie moment it was around such ideas that the sense of community of the rock festivals and the newly-found cultural purpose of popular music was structured. Frank Zappa could confidently state the revised Art-Culture equation in 1967:

> On a personal level, freaking out is a process whereby an individual casts off outmoded and restricting standards of thinking, dress, and social etiquette in order to express CREATIVELY his relationship to his immediate environment and the social structure as a whole. (30)

And Zappa's own vehicle for accomplishing this process was not poetry as such, not-literature nor a painting but a record album with the Mothers of Invention. The musical form was not

drawn from the rhythms and sentiments of American pop, it was something peculiarly specific to the artistic community idea of San Francisco. As Simon Frith states:

> The basis of the San Francisco community, though, was the city's artistic tradition. San Francisco music was made out of non-pop forms, blues and folk and jazz, and addressed non-pop issues; the San Francisco sound was, at heart, the sound of beatniks.(31)

In a similar way the growth of the American counter-culture's underground press was both the medium for arguing alternative cultural politics and the setting for elaborating a style of youth leisure and consumption. Record reviews, gig guides, tips on fashion, could exist comfortably alongside articles and interviews raising once again the Romantic banner of the unity of artistic practice and revolution. The aesthetics of the counter-cultural revolution were argued in a statement by John Wilcock, founder of the early American Underground papers, Village Voice and East Village Other:

> An artist is a leader, however small his following, and the very substance of art is revolution, and a questioning and sometimes overturning of the values of the society which nurtures it. So-called 'anti-social' behaviour is often the most constructive of all social behaviour because it is an affirmation of the individual's right to exist individually in a collective structure. (32)

This was the essence of the political strategy of the American counter-culture beneath all the imposed claptrap about Consciousness III and Flower Power: to once again make artistic expression political or at least culturally- meaningful, and to make politics Art. To have the revolution as much for the all important concepts of fun and individual expression, and as a creative aesthetic exercise, as for the reasons of the cold logic of

history. Very much a restatement of classic bohemian themes, it attracted classic responses from the America Left to bohemian meddling in the realm of 'serious politics'. An antipathy of purpose and design expressed by Jerry Rubin who, subpoenad to appear before the ridiculous HUAC in Washington for his activities on the Vietnam Day Committee, appeared dressed as an American Revolutionary War soldier:

> Most of the serious people on the Left in Berkeley were against it. They thought I should be rational and intellectual in my opposition to HUAC, not theatrical. But I had to trust my own media instincts. The only way to hurt HUAC was to zap them....(33)

This, for Rubin, was the start of the yippies' programme of 'guerilla theatre media politics'. The hippie counter-culture knew the power of all forms of media, and media coverage and control and was determined to exploit them to its own advantage. The straight, intellectual Left was despised precisely because it didn't seem to know the new balance of the dialectics of culture; because it hadn't mastered the relationship between life, art and revolution. For people like Rubin and Hoffman the revolution had to be a lived theatrical 'now', and not based on 'ideological hassles on theoretical bullshit, boring meetings':

> 'DROP OUT!' the yippies scream at them. Revolution is not what you believe, what organisation you belong to, or who you vote for - it's what you do all day, how you live. (34)

As the theatricality, the 'artiness' of conceptions of revolutionary practice didvided the hippie/yippie counter-culture from the American Left, so its actual subversive, radically-alternative and generally stronger strategies divided it from the gentler, more insular theatricality of the Beat Generation. In the line

of earlier 'generational' splits in the Romantic bohemian style, the Beats were largely content to be artists and live the artistic life: the hippies wanted to be artists and change the world.(35) The American hippie counter-culture attacked the market and educational relations of capitalism in a louder, more public fashion. Not content to suffer in the garret, it took the artistic redefinition of culture into the streets and into the market with its experiments in media institutions.

The general cultural face of hippie alternative experiments was as wide as its repercussions have been deep. But nothing captures the qualities of the hippie moment quite as well as the reworking of music and the press - and after a brief introduction to the immediate background of the British hippie counter-culture it's these areas which will form the central thrust of the remaining pages of this thesis. In Storm the Reality Studios William S.Burroughs, one of the many personalities to cross the Beat-hippie divide as well as national cultural boundaries, praised the role of the underground media in offering alternative perspectives to the mystifications of the 'straight' media:

> The underground press serves as the only effective counter to a growing power and more sophisticated techniques used by establishment mass media to falsify, misrepresent, misquote, rule out of consideration as a priori ridiculous, or simply ignore and block out of existence data, books, discoveries that they consider prejudicial to establishment interest.(36)

The British alternative press in its more lucid, more serious moments agreed with the diagnosis and the prescription. And British hippie musicians agreed with the sentiments: they saw their art as 'the symbol of a generation which felt that it might embody real change - either social, political or personal.'(37)

Whatever the British Left was saying about the emergence of the hippie counter-culture, the London popular media indulged its predelictıon for 'summer madness' ın reportıng ıts arrival. There was the customary mix of bewiderment and ınformed ignorance at confrontıng somethıng 'new': journalısts knew the hippıes had somehow orıgınated ın Amerıca, they knew they were associated wıth theır own clubs ın London, and they knew the real and allusive associatıons wıth drugs and mysticism, but not much else. Thus the style of reporting, even in its explanatory mode, was uncertain, relyıng on heavy use of inverted commas. But the attıtude was patronısing rather than fearful: apart from the moral connotatıons of drug use, there were few 'scare storıes' of the kind delıvered on cue agaınst the mods and rockers, the teds and the punks. Although acknowledging what was happenıng was bızarre, the writıng was humourous. Typıcal was the Daily Mırror July 17, 1967, whıch reported that the day before:

> Hundreds of young 'Hıppıes' wandered into London's Hyde Park to spread theır love-thy-neıghbour belıefs.

And the report goes on, the polıce ıntervened only twıce: once to tell a prayer-chantıng Allen Gınsberg he couldn't accompany hımself on an accordıon ın publıc wıthout a lıcence, and once to put a tıcket on a hıppıe's car for a parkıng offence.

Even when the threat of sex was raısed, lıttle danger of a 'moral panıc' was depıcted: as the same paper stated on July 24, 1967:

> The Flower People of London held an underground 'dance-ın' last nıght. They dıd the Explodıng Galaxıe ın a basement club. And some of the girls were topless.
> They were all 'beautıful people.' Or hıppıes.

There was no violence or threat of violence - a quality the popular press acknowledged, rather ruefully, was unusual for an example of youth culture. But then the media was wary of instantly labelling the Summer of Love as a specifically youthful phenomenon. It was taken more seriously; as something worth investigating. So the Mirror sent Donald Zec into the heart of Haight-Ashbury Flower Power to delve deeper into the origins:

> This is it - the end of the psychedelic rainbow, the 'turned-on' Shangri-la. The heart and tortured soul of Hippiedom where this 'flower' took root and bloomed around the world.

And he goes on:

> There are the freaks, and there are the true believers who argue it is better to make love than war.
> There are the young derelicts, and there are the healthy 'drop-outs' offering a new culture in exchange for what they call a 'bigoted, materialistic, hate-ridden and violent society'.
> The 'Flower Children' display a considerable intellectual virility and some are beautiful to behold.

The Times was less enthusiastic. Under the headline 'Singer derides the "flower people"', it sympathetically reported Frankie Vaughan's attack on the 'leeches on society'. Frankie, at the forefront of affluent youth's ideological struggles, was about to launch a campaign to 'stop the "hippy" influence from spreading' during his annual tour of British youth clubs. (The Times, September 12, 1967).

So there's a mixture of the usual incredulity and incomprehension associated with styles of working-class youth culture combined with a half-formed realisation that the ideological character of the hippies, even in the early heady days of mid

summer 1967, placed them apart: as something wider, more ageless, and less easily pinned down in the sphere of leisure and simple 'passing the time'. Even if more serious commentators often got it wrong, as in Frank Gannon's Pot, Pop and Acid in New Society, September 21, 1967:

> If the Beat Generation were social commentators and activists, the Beautiful People of the 1960s couldn't care less.

And even if Paul Goodman's comments, delivered at the Congress on the Dialectics of Liberation held at the Chalk Farm Roundhouse from July 15-30, 1967, overstate the initial antagonism to the potentials of hippie aesthetics and politics:

> ....with the Hippies there is a gut reaction from the beginning - they are dirty, indecent, shiftless; they threaten the self-justification of the system. (38)

The popular media may have agreed with the sentiments of abuse; its conscious awareness of the deeper threats of the hippie bohemian refusal was less well articulated.

What certainly was realised was that the style was fairly easily translatable into the terms of the fashion business. The Times ran an article in defence of 'long haired men' by American fashion writer Richard Carson in its Women's Page. And by the summer of 1967 the flowing psychedelic style was being produced by Dutch artists and dress designers Marijke Koger, Josje Leeger and Simon Posthuma from a basement in London's Montague Square, who could claim 'we are now personal tailors to the Beatles'. The style, unlike the other sub-cultural styles of the 1960s, had commercial potential beyond its immediate confines, into the wider market of fashion: in the words of Felicity Green, the

hippies were 'a blessing in flower-powered disguise for the Rag Trade'. Anybody who tried to beat a path down Carnaby Street then would never doubt such sentiments. The style was flash and smart, and could even be 'cultured' in its contrived affectations and poses - alongside Zec's 'derelicts' and Goodman's 'dirty, indecent and shiftless' drop-outs were the Beatles of Sergeant Pepper's cover, Jim Morrison's crafted looks and charisma the flowing presence of the Mamas and Papas and Grace Slick, and the Marks and Spencer paisley, cool-mod-into-hippie blur of the 'smarter' of the British pop groups and fans and club stylists. Simon Frith:

> In 1965, remembers Penny Reel, the Scene Club's coolest couple arrived, 'dressed in exotic Tibetan smocks, with Indian silk scarfs affixed to their wrists, sandals on their bare feet, wooden beads around their necks, daisies in their hair, and looking for all the world like, as one observer put it, two flecking gipsies. They proceed to tell anyone who will listen that love is all that really matters'. The mods became hippies and Penny Reel's point is that there was more in common between the 'stylists' of the various 1960s youth groups than between such eccentrics and their conformist imitators. (39)

The contemporary media's problem was similar to that faced later by the Centre's theorists: it had no memory beyond the level of stereotype, no vision beyond youth cultural imitation. Excluded, it never penetrated into the inner world of stylistic creativity.

So right from the start there was an air of ambiguity, a hedging of bets about the media's reporting of the hippie counter-culture. It was aware, unlike the Centre, that it could be something more than just another youth style to be fitted into a neat chronology of post-war fashions. The problem was its overt ideological aspirations: which went confidently beyond just dressing up, dancing, listening to music and street fighting.

It knew there was a sense of creativity about the whole series of summer escapades - like Yoko Ono wrapping a Trafalgar Square lion in canvas and string. It knew the counter-culture had pretensions to a lifestyle. But it had difficulty in locating the new cultural sensibility in any tangible context beyond the direct influence of Haight-Ashbury.

What was essentially missing from contemporary accounts as much as from later, more serious analyses was the sense that the visual and ideological stances of the hippie counter-culture were being made in the image of art and definitions of artistic practice. And being made, to a large extent, by artists. On the one hand the British counter-culture was the art school revolt of Hornsey, constructed from within an institutional setting carrying the Romantic bohemian concern for the cultural primacy of artistic practice. But the other side of the ideological reality, beneath the youth culture rhetoric, was the conscious updating of the earlier rallying calls of Romantic bohemian art: the wider transformation of the institutional means of cultural expression. A radical cultural critique was designed which stressed aesthetics rather than inequality, was about style more than consistency to historical models, and was as much about practical styles of living as ideological rhetoric.

As in America, the direct antecedents of the British hippie underground lay in the 1950s and '60s milieu of artistic discourse centred around the Beats. The experiments in art and media by Ginsberg, Kesey, Burroughs and others fed ideas from the Beat Generation directly into the American hippie counter-culture:

they also directly influenced conceptions of artistic practice in Britain.

In The Beat Generation Bruce Cook argues convincingly that the influence of the American experience extended beyond the realms of popular culture into the translation of certain serious artistic ideas. Again, as I argued earlier, the process of transatlantic identification was 'natural': a function of the 'ideal typical' nature of the post-war American capitalist dream and its pervasive hold on the imagination of the western world. But Cook adds:

> if there were Dutch Beats, Turkish Beats, French Beats, and German Beats (and there were), there was nowhere that the movement had greater or more lasting impact than it did on England. (40)

Cook is correct in his recognition of the degree of artistic penetration achieved by American artists, and correct in his assertion that most of the reasons for this had to do with the general cultural ascendance of America in the post-war period. But when he states about the British experience that 'the Beats as outsiders made a strong direct appeal to working-class youth', and that 'the Beats found acceptance among the great mass of English youth'(41), his analysis is far less securely founded: as we saw earlier, and as the most basic accounts of British post-war popular culture reveal, the 'great mass of English youth' was tuned to the less radical edge of American culture, with its basis in leisure rather than pure artistic expression. A quote from Malcolm McLaren captures the popular, cruder side of the cultural division. Remembering his days at St.Martin's School of Art in the early 1960s ('after three months I was a beatnik....'):

> At art school you could tell who was hip by the LPs they carried. It was all Bob Dylan, Big Bill Broonzy, Leadbelly - people who I thought were totally sexless. (42)

Beatnik McLaren preferred the far from sexless appeal of the Rolling Stones to the more intellectual appeal of more orthodox Beatnik musical stimulation - a man whose knows that the art of culture rarely lies in the head.

Cook's aberration in misjudging the popular culture discernment of British youth is all the more puzzling as he then goes on to draw on Jeff Nuttall's personalised history of the British underground: and whatever faults Bomb Culture may have, it certainly never argues that the Beat Generation of art, music and fringe politics on this side of the Atlantic in the 1950s and '60s was the property of working-class youth or the expression of working-class youth culture. And again it's strange when Cook accurately argues that the actions of the British Beats, like those of their American counterparts, 'were protests against stifling restrictions of official culture and national spirit'.

Nuttall brings this point out dramatically in his passionate, polemical and rambling narrative. What drags the ragbag of artists together in Britain during this period is the real and symbolic threats of 'bomb culture' itself: where the artistic conscience, such as it exists, is drawn under the encompassing banner of CND as the one sensible form of political disaffection, and where the bomb is representative of a stifling, ultimately dangerous national Establishment culture fundamentally antagonistic towards innovatory and free artistic practice. As is probably the case with aspects of its current resurgence, CND was the easily accessible symbol of anti-authoritarian identity,

and became the one form of roughly direct political confrontation the bohemian art world of the time could stomach.

George Melly's autobiographical history of the British post-war jazz scene, Owning Up, illustrates this point well when depicting the radical chic of the 'raver' fanatically following the style of Acker Bilk in 1960:

> Another mark of the raver was the CND symbol. Among the musicians there were some, myself among them, who were actively committed to the cause of nuclear disarmament, and the same was certainly true of a proportion of the real fans, but I rather felt that for most of them the symbol was anti-authoritarian rather than anti-nuclear, not that I found this in any way unsympathetic. (43)

Melly's book is concerned mainly with giving a readable and funny account of his own affiliation to the variety of emerging British jazz styles: it stops short of forming the wider links between the themes and personalities to the same depth as Bomb Culture, which remains, and probably will remain, the most penetrating analysis of the '50s and '60s Beat underground scene. But both books state the almost missionary zeal with which music, and jazz in particular was followed in the period. And the jazz world was largely populated by art students and their imitators who saw their role as the most zealous fans and the various movements' stylistic innovators. Again referring to the Trad boom of 1960, Melly notes:

> Its audiences were young, but not particularly young. The majority were in their late teens, but many were in their early twenties. There was a proportion of art school students, and a larger proportion who hoped to be taken for art school students.(44)

And talking about the mid 1950s, another significant reference

appears, denoting the mixed world of jazz musicians and art students - in 1954:

> The great success of that time...was the band which had attracted and held all Humph's disappointed revivalist fans, and which won the adherence of the recently-self-styled Beatniks (until that year they had called themselves existentialists), Soho layabouts and the art school students, and was led by my first boss, Cy Laurie. (45)

And going back even further, to the early days of the 1950s when the de rigeur garb of musician and fan alike was the carefully contrived sloppiness of duffle coat and sandals 'with socks', Melly asserts that 'the source of this was largely the post-war art schools via Humph and Wally....'(46) Without overstating its significance, either here or in terms of Melly's own thoughts, the whole of Owning Up is littered with the interweaving of art school and jazz scene in the 1950s: the personalities; the nuances added; the involvement in stylistic transitions at the more self-consciously exclusive end of the popular culture spectrum. And, in turn, the 1950s British Beat scene was organised to a large extent around the world of jazz. Its style was contrived around the culturally-marginal domain of a musical middle ground: somewhere between the 'lower', rock 'n' roll preserve of working-class youth and the traditional 'high culture' of the middle-class. And its significance is this sense of class and cultural marginality: a sense, seen in both Melly and Nuttall, of critical dissociation through a conscious effort to stay 'outside'; on the boundaries of cultural and social definitions of behaviour.

In the literature of the time, the milieu is captured

partially by the work of the Angry Young Men: although the authors (Amis, Wain, Osborne etc.) described by this vague category can hardly be described as radicals; and although there was little link between them and either the more serious contemporary side of Beat revolt or later forms of protest, their anti-heroes exhibit the wish to retreat into the existential uncertainty of acquired classlessness. The Dixons, the Lumleys and the Porters of the '50s see themselves as part of the popular, 'harmlessly eccentric' image of bohemian existence: anti-intellectual, largely amoral, seeking identification with any class or cultural group other than their own, they resort to a form of selfish individualism in their lack of serious social commitment. The substance of their 'anger' is portrayed through pranks, parodies and a deep, definitely European sense of isolation: even Osborne's Jimmy Porter, first presented to a bemused Royal Court audience in 1956, is committed only to individual polemic in his tirades against the Establishment, women and the bomb. They fit broadly into the second category described here by Nuttall:

> Up to the point of the failure of CND it would be broadly true to say that pop was the prerogative of working-class teenagers, protest was the prerogative of middle-class students, and art was the prerogative of the lunatic fringe. The pop fans despised protest as being naive and art as being posh, the protesting students despised pop as being commercial and art as being pretentious, and the artists despised pop for being tasteless and protest as being drab. (47)

And although this statement is perhaps rather broad in its truth, we can take Nuttall's point even if we shouldn't be surprised by it: the culture of the affluent society had lost

none of its old demarcation in terms of aesthetics, ideology and leisure.

But, Nuttall goes on, certain attempts were made to achieve a tentative fusion of pop and art and protest: paramount was the irresistible popularity of that media institution, the Goon Show:

> The Goon Show was protest. The Goon Show was surrealist and therefore art, and the Goon Show was every National Serviceman's defence mechanism, was therefore pop. (48)

There was skiffle ('folksy enough for the protesters, creative enough for the artists, twangy enough for the pop fans'), there was the imported West Coast poetry readings which almost daringly introduced jazz into the procedings, there was the art school humour of bands like the Temperance Seven and the Alberts. All these factors emerging at the turn of the decade were, in Nuttall's opinion, bridges between the otherwise segregated strands of cultural expression. And then towards the mid '60s there was the definitive movement of art in the direction of pop: seen for Nuttall in the popularity of the American school of Pop Art; but seen, perhaps more significantly, in the changing attitudes towards the production of popular music held by some of the groups of the time:

> The members of The Move, of The Pretty Things and the Rolling Stones, were vastly different, socially and psychologically, from the hard-case rock 'n' rollers. Ex-art students, many of them, who came into pop by way of R&B, they had memories of anti-bomb protest, of the Alberts and the Temperance Seven. (49)

At a press conference in August 1967 following his successful appeal against his notorious drugs conviction, Mick Jagger,

sporting a 'made in Chelsea' Indian tunic, argued 'I am a rebel against society, but not an obvious one'. Personally I've always thought Jagger's charisma, as the Americans would say, sucks: a rock star with the obvious rebellious appeal of Sir Geoffrey Howe. But then Sir Geoffrey presumably posseses deep, far from obvious merits: Margaret Thatcher knows something we don't. And in a sense Jagger knew something the contemporary media had yet to grasp: as Nuttall describes, it was where the attitudes and cultural intonations of the art school, with its stresses, its hidden nuances, its style, was dramatically crossing into the realm of more popular culture - with a cultural significance we shall see shortly.

But in the more specific terms of the emerging London underground, the major influence lay, again according to Nuttall's account, among artists, critics, and writers whose eyes remained fairly steadily focused on America in general and the American Beats in particular. Many of the figures Nuttall mentions as being influential in the mid-'60s transitional period - Alex Trocchi, Jim Haynes, Tom McGrath, Miles - were to become the founding fathers of the hippie counter-culture's media experiments: the people who were to actively create a cultural style in the image of art, according to artistic solutions, and in terms of the problems of survival in a de-aestheticised culture. Perhaps the high point of the time - the high water mark of the British counter-cultural Beat milieu in the process of transition to the hippie style - was the Albert Hall poetry reading in 1965, where the most significant members of the post-CND English literary Beat scene read alongside West Coast

favourites such as Corso, Ferlinghetti and Ginsberg.

> The underground revolution starts with putting its own house in order: It introduces movies, slides, theatre, and events at dances, it has its own newspapers, movies, artists and galleries, presses, poets and writers, a possibility would be its own bank and money....
>
> Miles, IT, no7

> Are you a member of any political, social or religious organisation? London OZ invites members or executives of such groups to contribute a 300 to 500 word justification of its existence. Start from thr assumption that your organisation is tedious, redundant, anachronistic and crackpot.
>
> Classified ad., OZ, no2

In clutching the British Summer of Love to its journalistic breast, the popular media in 1967 certainly made the mistake of viewing the hippie phenomenon as something fundamentally 'new'; with a disturbing ideological facade perhaps, but really just another strange moment in post-war fashion which had appeared magically from somewhere, probably California. But if it missed the historical dimension its omissions were no more damning, nor really more glaring than those offered by later sociological accounts that should have known better and would have done had they bothered to escape the fads of contemporary cliché. Concentrating on the visual elegance of Flower Power, even devoting two pages to 'Emma, the hippie hippo' is not really any more ridiculous than attempting to fit something as historically complex as the serious bohemian artistic cultural critique into a few pages of rhetoric about middle-class parent cultures. Both styles trivialise: but the flaws of the majority

of the sociological accounts of the hippie counter-culture, by no means just those associated with the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, is that by taking too seriously the counter-culture's undoubted associations with forms of youth cultural expression they miss the deeper resonances of the hippie style. Even those accounts that pay lip service to the debts to Romanticism and bohemianism adopt a patronising stance. The problem is, though, that as ridiculous and mis-conceived and utopian as the 'hippie moment' of 1967 and '68 may have been, it was no more ridiculous in its ideological and practical intentions than the majority of 'respectable' attempts to widen and deepen the aesthetic critique we saw earlier. Artistic innovation may be mis-conceived; but, initially at least, it's also usually misconstrued.

The ideological texture of the hippie counter-culture, beyond its obvious and often misleading associations with a style of youth leisure activity on a wider scale, can only be made sense of if read in this way: as, in other words, a style which had its basis in a new form of artistic practice and a new form of aesthetic solution to social and cultural problems. But one always aware of its history. This is the aspect of the 'hippie moment' I shall concentrate on now: how the experience of British culture in 1967 and 1968 was resolved and articulated through attempts to redefine two of the primary institutions of cultural expression - the 'popular read' and popular music.(50)

In the first category, the alternative press, I will focus on OZ and IT; by far the most influential and most widely read of the hippie magazines. Pre-dating the the majority of other, accessible hippie magazines, they also more accurately capture

the spirit of the crucial 'moment'. Of course, other magazines argued similar sentiments to OZ and IT, but they usually lacked the wit, sparkle, and grip on the politics and aesthetics of provocation, as well as the readership. And others, such as those associated with the British wing of the International Situationists, knew the aesthetics of counter-cultural critiques but tended to be short-lived. For example, in the mid 1960s the paper Heatwave, edited by Chris Gray, could be found making similar points on the relationship of work and leisure, on the 'total revolution of life', and pioneering the photo-montage technique used most successfully by OZ.(51) And Heatwave's successor, the short-lived King Mob Echo, quoting the words of Raoul Vaneigem, made some important and familiar points about the relation of art and society, praising the Dadaists and their attitude of 'contempt for art and bourgeois values, the same refusal of ideology, the same will to live.'(52) And in general terms, the London King Mob provided a sense of local colour to the London political counter-culture in 1968, as their French counterparts contributed the artistic elements of the events in Paris in May.(53)

But the heart, soul and mind of the British counter-culture was displayed in graphic entirety in OZ and IT: they revealed all the elements of a modernised bohemian cultural critique; they were never shy about stating precedents of earlier themes and personalities; and they were probably the only two of the vast collection of hippie-associated papers to make national fame and be widely read outside their city of origin.

In the hippie manual Playpower Richard Neville argues his view of the origins of the underground press:

> Usually, they are begun for fun, attracting a pool of underemployed creators bent on inventing a new language to communicate new ideas in a new style. (54)

What else could Neville say, given he started the original OZ, in Australia, on April Fools Day 1963? Whatever the founding editor's original motivations, he brought the magazine to London and the first issue appeared in February 1967. - to critical reviews in the more orthodox popular media that were less than enthusiastic. That organ of liberal reason the Sunday Express called the magazine 'crude, nasty, erotic...and debasing'; The People, not wishing to be outdone, rallied with 'evocative reading for your pop fan daughter....don't help spread this Muck'; The News of the World, an authority on such mucky matters, replied with 'obscene and dirty...with do-it-yourself formulas for LSD....'(55) Despite such protestations, OZ flourished, and by 1968 had a print run of 20,000, although its circulation was not to peak until the trial for conspiracy to 'corrupt the morals of young children and other young people! three years later.

The fortnightly IT, originally International Times until the threat of legal action from a less radical paper with a similar name, pre-dated OZ by five months. Launched by Love Books, but later taken over by its staff 'in a fit of revolutionary fervour inspired by Paris and Hornsey (as everyone was in those days)' states Richard Neville, the paper had an initial print run of 5,000, rising to 16,000 and peaking with the not inconsiderable figure of 50,000 in 1968.(56)

Neville richly praised the competition in the following way:

> IT's most important contribution to England's Underground has been its own existence. The 'information sheet' approach has wet-nursed hundreds of Underground ventures and with editorial impartiality IT has integrated all kinds of Underground phenomena within its pages.(57)

An almost praising review of four years of OZ's activity in the corruption of morality trade came from the magazine's defence counsel, John Mortimer, in his opening remarks to the court in the 1971 trial:

> Members of the Jury, this is a case about dissent. It is a case about dissenters; a case about those who are critical of the established values of our society, who ask us to reconsider what they believe to be complacent values, and are anxious, on that basis, to build what they think, (and what we may not think) is a better world. (58)

But then there were the dissenting views from within the pages of the Underground media. Questioning the effectiveness of the alternative press in its declared aims, Sheldon Williams, in OZ 14, edited by Paul Lawson, wrote on The Yellow-on-Orange Press:

> On the news front, they kindle the same kind of hysteria as the faceless leader-writers of the dailies....The conception that you work at what you like and like what you work at needs keener explanation - otherwise in puritan Britain and probably elsewhere the argument will find few takers....Whacky pictures are alright, but not exclusively so....

So what were the aims of the Underground press? What type of Underground venture were such magazines encouraging? What were the 'established' and 'complacent values' they criticised and asked a wider audience to reconsider? What was the style of the alternative media's dissent?

In the serious art world, the art press serves a useful if

not crucial series of functions. As John Walker writes, the contemporary art glossy is important in the production of modern art because, as a 'feedback mechanism' it legitimates and validates styles and so influences younger artists. And because such journals tend to be heavily dependent on gallery advertising revenue, they have become 'an integral part of the art marketing system': they actively reinforce the ideology that in 'our society artworks have exchange-value rather than use-value.'(59) But Walker makes a further interesting observation: that as much as being about art, the majority of post-war journals have come to think of themselves as art - a process he terms 'the conflation of art and the art periodical'.

As anyone who remembers those heady days of the late '60s, or has seen such films as Blow Up knows, the art of the hippie Underground worked against the static and the constant: like Dada, it discouraged passive contemplation. Psychedelic art was about movement: its natural setting was the rock concert, the festival where the swirling forms of psychedelic, neo-Art Nouveau symbolism could be projected by lights and strobes; its natural forum for innovation and experimentation was the Arts Laboratory, which flourished nationally in the image of Jim Haynes' venture in Drury Lane. Like Dada and Surrealism, hippie art was about the immediate and the spontaneous, about the 'happening' rather than the fixed and permanent. This was the claim of the ideological stance: something that is transitory, that exists no longer than it lasts, cannot easily be tampered with; cannot easily be translated into something external to its form, into exchange-value.

Of course, there were the record sleeves - from the

Incredible String Band to Cream's Disraeli Gears - the comic books, and Robert Crumb's Fritz the Cat: artwork clashing with the desire for impermanence, threatening the values of spontaneity that upset Establishment critics and moralists as much as any objection to content. The artifacts of the counter-culture's prolific energies jarred against Neville's prescription for the 'archetypal Underground (anti) art form':

> It is where the Muses - art, poetry, dance, music and drama - have an orgy, with the audience joining in, and the whole operation essentially unrepeatable, beyond preservation, in constant flux and out of anyone's full control. (60)

Remembering a perceptive observation by Robert Hughes, the career of the finished art object is eminently controllable.

And returning to Walker's sentiments, the first thing striking the reader of the alternative media is their construction as works of arts: as well as providing the valuable function of an outlet for articles, ideas that would not have been published elsewhere, they were promoting an image of artistic practice and artistic content. They were, themselves, an image of art. Deciphering the overlays, deconstructing the montages reveals the tension and the irreducible interweaving between art and politics and art and 'content': conventional distinctions are deliberately blurred, recalling the output of Dada and the Surrealists. In their visual presentation the magazines, and particularly OZ speak for themselves: in their pioneering graphics, against which both straight and Left propaganda seemed optically vacuous and dull; in their sheer visual creativity and celebration of the psychedelic style, they were meant to be consumed on the spot, stuck on bedsit walls, used to roll joints,

as reference books for the weekend in the smoke, and as the last word in the toilet read. Unlike Socialist Worker and Socialist Challenge they were ideally sold from the street corner. In their anti-conventionalism, their knowledge of their audience, they could afford to make no compromise. Beyond this words are superfluous: they beg to be seen.

The ideology is captured, paradoxically, by a critical letter appearing in IT 33, in June 1968. A disenchanted writer stated:

> You of the Underground sympathies, you the beautiful people flying high above the grays, you of the high ideals and minority individualistic attitudes - there is no name for you but you can identify yourself. I appreciate your ideals, but you are losing them, they are fast being forgotten to hypocritical shit of your self-enforced alienation. You have adopted a language, which you write in those frantic meaningless images, searching for something way-out to shout or pen diagonally - you are trying to outdo Harlem hip, which was at least sensewise musical. You are forcing yourselves to be artificial, but artificiality is not creative, and above all it is not true.

The problem this writer faced was his misunderstanding of the nature of the Underground media: that individualism and creativity through artistic eyes, cannot be separated in the first instance at least; that, in a sense, it was only natural that nobody could ever quite keep up with the innovation and the outrage - this was the only way to stop being conventional, to stop the threat of incorporation, to stop, as James Cameron said of Private Eye, the perils of being fashionable in a coarse sense. If our critic had read an IT from later in the same year, he would have seen the ideology spelled out in a reprint of a manifesto from the French Le Comité d'Action:

> Before we can bring into being a collective and

> permanent creative process - not one reserved for an elite - we must put an end to the divorce between 'art' and 'life', to the distinction between artistic activities and everyday political and social ones. Must not the creative act be freed from censorship that invalidates it, and the Unconscious mind from the police state that negates it. (IT 38, August/September 1968)

This, surely, illustrates the classic Romantic dilemma: is the creative act, the ability to see in alternative and questioning ways a universal or is it the reserved occupation of the gifted, those consciously and confidently apart? As voyeurs, as those waiting for the moment of wider cultural creative liberation, how long do we have to wait? Is the 'art of revolution', the celebration of counter-cultural refusal being done for us or to us, with an underlying contempt for the masses no different to that characterising earlier aesthetic revolutions? The politics of the counter-culture's aesthetic refusal refusal reflect the problems in a tradition that can embrace Courbet and the PRB, Ruskin and Mallarmé, Surrealism and naturalism. The concern is still with liberation and revolution, with, even, 'peace and love': but the leaders of the hippies' institutional media revolt woulnd't have been seen dead lying on their stomachs in a public park with a bunch of dahlias stuck up their arse: their mission was to exploit the tension between cultural change and artistic innovation. We should never forget that the art of creativity deals with metaphor and nuance: 'peace' has the same euphemistic ring that 'socialism' has for the Socialist Workers Party.

But the 'distancing' of the hippie creative coteries from the wider object of liberation was not really their fault, nor unique: as we've seen, it remains a quality of the temperament that yearns for the aesthetic revolution: for 'selfish' indiv-

idualism, for example, to look at Paris in May 1968 and see, in David Widgery's jaundiced words, 'that the most important elements were the rather unbrilliant wall slogans and other acts of Gallic student charm'.[4]

The tension was between two largely conflicting versions of artistic practice: between what the Underground wanted as an ideal, and what it actually did in the day-to-day running of the aesthetic revolution. Like past bohemian solutions, the demarcation between the prosaic life of the wider culture and the select style of the artist, the creator, the stylist remained distinct. On the one hand, in OZ 13 - the self-styled 'Agit OZ', possibly because of a series of quotations from Marx, Lukacs, Mao, Lenin, Trotsky etc. - Jean-Jaques Lebel wrote:

> Whether you make money by playing Brecht or by playing Moliere it is exactly the same thing. You are giving a spectacle to people who do not participate in any way in what's happening. They consume the spectacle in exactly the same way as they consume when they buy a car or a refrigerator or chewing gum....Some painters want to bring their paintings to the factories but that is a completely counter-revolutionary attitude. The workers don't need pseudo avant-garde paintings in the factories....They have to make their own art which will probably not be with brushes and canvasses, but an art which will be completely integrated into the life process itself.

Grand words from the militant, caring-sharing wing of the counter-culture. But whatever the distinctions the Situationists made between the 'spectacle' and the 'situation', in more common parlance the art, the practical interventions of the counter-culture remained committed to the spectacular, the 'happening' and that more realistically seen as 'completely integrated' into the life of the restricted, creative 'life process itself'.

Following the police raid on Indica bookshop, and the seizure of its stock of IT's, IT 10, March 13-26 1967 reported a Dada-esque 'event' to celebrate the bust:

> On Staurday, London saw the Death and Resurrection of International Times as performed by inmates of the Central Line, under the direction of John Hopkins. Harry Fainlight, a London poet who LIVES out all that is meant by that word POET, volunteered to die in the role of INTERNATIONAL TIMES. He was put in a red coffin at the Cenotaph, Whitehall. A ceremony took place during which about 30 movements chanted on. The coffin was carried into the bowels of London via the portals of Westminster underground station where a rebirth journey took place. Music and dancing accompanied the coffin on the tube train.

As had been the case so often in the past, the strategies of counter-cultural refusal seemed at variance with certain stated aspirations. The alternative media may, as Neville suggests, have encouraged the Underground's supportive functions - the BIT information service, Release, the anti-university, the odd macrobiotic restaurant etc. - but its concerns reflected, essentially, its historical location: constructed in the image of artistic practice, it was constructed for artists, for those attuned to the deeper creative nuances and inflections. The counter-culture was most at home, most convincing when it was organising its existence according to the demand from the Association of Members of Hornsey College of Art, printed in IT 34, June 28-July 11 1968:

> The revolution only remains one where imagination takes over. Conventional left-wing responses to our desperate pragmatism are useless, or worse: in an unpolitical culture like ours, it is counter-productive to repeat abstract slogans ('Get the workers out!!','Remember the Third World!') because the time isn't ripe for them.

Significantly, as Neville notes in Playpower, the Underground

'while generally ambivalent towards student disruptions, warmed to Hornsey....somehow sensing an affinity of purpose.' The affinity was organised partly around the joint rejection of the chic, bourgeois, commodity form of contemporary art - a positive tie-in between the 'academic protest' of the art schools and the wider aesthetic cultural critique of the Underground. But it was also, for a certain crucial historical moment, the sharing of other assumptions. The wonderful, inimitable quality of the alternative media was that its readers knew that a good percentage of its output was rubbish, that buying it was 'wasting 2/6 on the biggest load of boring old scrofulous crap to come my way in many a long day' as one letter stated in OZ: the thing was they, we carried on handing over halfcrowns to the friendly neighbourhood street seller. David Widgery could argue 'the hippies in England represent about as powerful challenge to the power of the state as the people who put foreign coins in their gas meters.'(OZ 6) The token Leftie thrown monthly into the OZ extravaganza, Widgery consistently misread the alternative media's philosophy in a way the converted did not: the media knew its audience and the audience knew its media. The nexus was the affirmation of shared values: but when those values emphasised constant creative change, innovation as an end, and the pressing desire to stay one cultural jump ahead - then you knew you were on a fairly safe bet in the entertainment stakes, that OZ and IT would never be really boring, and that they would be at least more stimulating than the latest bulletin on the prospects of revolution from the International Socialists.

Caught up in the Marxist tradition of seeing labour as the primary transformative agent in human history, Widgery, like

the Left in general made the mistake according to the hippies of taking the idea of 'labour' too literally, as being, even in its future liberated state, just the non-exploited continuation of existing patterns of work: it wasn't so much that the hippies advocated the right not to work, although many did of course - the essential quality of the counter-culture's ideology of cultural practice was that labour must be creative, must actively break down distinctions of work and leisure, must be fun. In OZ 15, a certain Clive James, writing from Pembroke College, Cambridge argued:

> ....the cultural ambition of the Underground people as a whole remains villainous low.... The Underground, expressing itself compulsively, has come up with some styles of dress, a few good ways to decorate the walls, some tricks with lights and some copycat graphics....The true significance of the Underground is as a political movement and political movements are not in themselves creative - all they can create is the possibility for creation.

Richard Neville disagreed with the 'deferred gratification', let's-just-pave-the-way ideology of his compatriot. The ideal was the statement from The Hornsey Affair stated on page 349 above: sentiments bearing more than a close resemblance to the plea by D.H.Lawrence A Sane Revolution, given full-page prominence in OZ 26. As stated by Neville in Playpower, it was:

> There is one quality which enlivens both the political and cultural denominations of youth protest; which provides its most important innovation; which has the greatest relevance for the future; which is the funniest, freakiest and the most effective. This is the element of play.....(61)

And play can never just be a future state: for the hippies it had to be Now, and it had to realisable in terms of their wider

cultural practice. This is why the late '60s bohemian counter-culture put the full weight of its energies into the institutional reorganisation of the media; why the aesthetic strategies of cultural change involved posters, printing, publishing, papers, bookshops, film, video - in these areas work could be transformed into a process, an activity where 'every Monday morning is a Saturday night'. The modernised forms of cultural expression provided the accessible 'solutions' to the problems of the modernised, up-to-date cultural experience: the possibility of a day-to-day activity permitting ideological authenticity and yet more or less guaranteeing survival in a cruel world. As Neville realised, 'artists play', and as the history of Romantic art has demonstrated to those who could be bothered to look, 'purposeless play is creative'. Jeff Nuttall could write in IT 25, that with few exceptions 'the psychedelic experience seems to have added nothing to the general body of creative achievement that was not there before': but these were the comments of a previous generation, of a boring old fart, to use the current vernacular, reading history too literally, too purposefully - of someone who was 35 in 1968 and didn't even really approve of dope. Neville preferred a more selective reading:

> Today, media is substitute play. The play element fizzled out of established culture in the nineteenth century, when work was sanctified. In the last hundred years, media has kept play alive, if not kicking. That is why the Underground is obsessed with media in all its forms; why most of its enterprises are media enterprises and why the Underground's most brilliant media manipulators are born with the greatest flair for fun. Media is armchair play. (62)

Media experimentation and redefinition was the artistic innovation of the modern world: immediate, personal and culturally relevant,

it reinforced the ideology that, as Alex Trocchi stated in IT 26, 'what the Victorians called 'work' does not ennoble, and that even if it did, it would still be an anachronism'. Through the media the hippie counter-culture could pursue the central claim of the Romantic critique that the work and leisure of art, of creative cultural practice are indivisible: they could certainly not be subordinate to the routines and demands of the straight world. Those at the forefront of the counter-cultural vanguard were not so much lazy and selfish as individualistic in the time-honoured tradition of art: as the Hornsey students realised, if it didn't involve 'working for one's living by living in one's work' it wasn't worth a light. The style of counter-cultural refusal - liguistically and visually modernised in the image of America but with a far older, more profound ideological base - rejected the mundanity and boredom of uncreative capitalist labour: as Neville noted 'there are no Positions Vacant columns in the Underground press'.

If any one area of the contemporary media explosion captured all these qualities in the popular imagination of the late 1960s it was music: a field where the creative spirit could surely fulfill Timothy Leary's demand - 'YOU ARE A GOD ACT LIKE ONE'.

> If I want to be serious I put on Bach, or Ornette Coleman. I certainly wouldn't go out and buy the Grateful Dead or the Fugs.
>
> Manfred Mann.

In the February 1967 edition of the San Francisco paper The Oracle appeared 'Some Principles' of rock music's cultural form and role: included were the claims that 'rock is a legitimate avant-garde art form'; that it is 'an intensely participational

and nontypographical art form'; that 'far from being degenerate or decadent, rock is a regenerative and revolutionary art, offering us our first real hope for the future (indeed, for the present) since August 6,1945'; that 'rock seems to have synthesised most of the intellectual and artistic movements of our time and culture'; that 'rock is creating the social rituals of the future'; and that 'the medium is indeed the message, and rock knows what that means'.(63) And the changes in music's cultural stance, the revisions in its personality, intent and style were indeed dramatic at this time: as Nik Cohn says of the Beatles following Revolver, and their discovery of the properties of the psychedelic experience:

> ....it greatly changed them. Right then, they quit being just a rock group, Liverpool roughnecks with long hair and guitars and fast mouths, and they turned into mystics, would-be saints. (64)

There were other bands that changed, similarly following the new cultural prescription, and those that appeared to directly and unequivocally express it without having concern for previous, less grand ideologies of musical production, consumption and taste. The bands of the time remain at the pioneering, vanguard end of the rock legend spectrum, even when the clichéd and eclectic memory of rock history has treated some less kindly than others. IT's regular consumer guide, 'If music be the food of love your stable [sic] diet' recommended the following for inspired listening in June 1968 as selected by Chick Churchill of Ten Years After: Love, Cream, Hendrix, Jefferson Airplane, Canned Heat, Vanilla Fudge. Miles' 'Magic Music, Nova Music, & Pink' review in a November edition of IT that year, quotes

the most significant current albums as the Beatles' White, the Stones' Beggars Banquet ('their best-ever record'), and George Harrison's Wonderwall. And so on through the gamut of Janis Joplin, the Doors, Jethro Tull, The Band, Traffic - all in some way conforming to that essential adjective in the new popular music critical notation, 'significant'. But significant as what? What was wrong with the language of the old days, of sentimentality, love, dancing and having a good time pure and simple - the language of sheer youthful hedonism that had marked the emergence of rock 'n' roll and accompanied the Beat boom of the early '60s?

The crucial reorganising concept, of course, was the determined attempt to live up to such declarations as that offered by The Oracle amongst a host of others. - musicians realised their position in the cultural dialectic, music had to progress, it had to be taken seriously as a form of pure expression. Asked about his influence on the wider cultural transformations of the 1960s, the American Pop Artist Roy Lictenstein claimed in IT 24, 'the look of POP comes from POP artists, it couldn't come from anywhere else.' In a vital sense this was true: the new, self-confident musical personality knew as much about visual style as rhythical form, as much about the blending of image and multi-media technique as musical craft. But in a further sense, the argument was about authenticity: of defining rock against pop as something superior in form and vision. The music of the counter-culture was not concerned with just passively reflecting the ideas of the wider culture: it was a source of ideas about consumption, about leisure, and about change.

The natural, the only model for this process of redefinition

was art. Just as the general counter-cultural media constructed its practical cultural interventions around a modernised image of Romantic artistic practice, so the new rock form defined itself against the commercialism and cultural assumptions of pop by reference to artistic ideologies, artistic demands. As Simon Frith states:

> Musicians began to identify themselves with romantic artists generally - writers, painters, poets; they began to assume a culturally well-educated audience. Musicians moved from show biz to bohemia; bohemians seized music as one more means of self-expression. (65)

Like their American counterparts, the British musician-bohemians shared certain qualities with their audience: again, the media knew the consumer and the consumer knew the media. There was a certainty, a cosy feeling of security: a feeling of shared assumptions of personality, of creative freedom, of leisure, of the symbolism of cultural expression. As both sides in the equation knew, it was all about community: we've got our art, our creativity, our aesthetic freedom - leave the rest to the kids, the philistines. The music bohemians, both artist and knowing consumer, defined themselves as cultural outsiders: to paraphrase Mallarmé, give them Herman's Hermits, but for God's sake don't give them Pink Floyd to spoil. That the kids in most provincial towns carried on dancing to Motown, preferred more traditional musical sentiments, and thought of hippies as an inviting target for a well-aimed boot shows how remarkably well the separation worked.

If the new artists hadn't mastered the techniques of taking over the capitalist commercial beast in its entirety, rock was at least granted a measure of autonomy, of creative licence in

pursuing its aesthetic regeneration. Record companies knew they had to cater for the tastes of the new artist-consumer elite, as the explosion of subsidiary, 'progressive' labels in the late '60s demonstrates: but did they understand the aesthetics of rock's new personality? The problem for the companies, and also for the artists, was that the typical hippie consumer was discerning in his or her critical appraisal. To an extent, of course, the counter-cultural milieu provided a packaged research department, an audience committed ideologically to innovation and creativity. As Miles noted in IT 38:

> The problem of people 'selling-out' will possibly never be solved at this stage....It is regrettable that the U/G is thus a 'test-bed' for new sounds and talent and receives none of the rewards.

But the problem was that the shared assumptions of the new rock aesthetics demanded that above all else music was for listening to, for 'reading' for allusion, symbolism, meaning. Who could blame them if they also read the music for signs of 'selling-out', for watering-down creative idealism and innovatory forms in pursuit of commercial success. Woe betide any band that momentarily forgot the axiom of Romantic art: that the philistine had to kept out, left hammering on the door in outraged disbelief and misunderstanding. When it came to taking liberties, to breaking the conventions of anti-conventional art, hell had no fury like a hippie scorned in the pursuit of authenticity.

This is the well known trait of the rock personality emerging in the late '60s, where the 'progressive' side of popular music consciously adopts an artistic stance, adopts an often oblique sense of cultural refusal and criticism in affirmation of the

values of a bohemian cognoscenti. The other side of the coin appears less accessible, certainly less well documented: inverting the trajectory, it's as Simon Frith states, 'bohemians seized music as one more means of self-expression'. The hidden dimension of rock's artistic, bohemian, counter-cultural pretensions is why a significant element of the transformation was made directly in the image of the art school experience; why the subsequent style of rock's cultural presentation and stance expresses the attitudes, the concerns of the art school personality.

As my history of art's development under capitalism has continually stressed, the experience of artistic practice has become increasingly problematical and tense. The art student, and in particular the trainee Fine Artist appears caught on the cusp of two conflicting ideologies embedded in the history and material practice of art education and the social institutions of modern art. The legacy of the Romantic spirit, the popular conception of artistic practice, stresses creative autonomy, the power of aesthetic cultural intervention, the unification of work and leisure, the dream of artistic hedonism and freedom - its antithesis demands social responsibility, stresses the place of the work of art as a cultural and economic commodity, prefers restraint and utility and rational behaviour to the unbridled passions and imagination of the artistic dream. And confronting these opposites in the day-to-day experience of the art school training, the student knows that the likely reality is a UB40, that the seemingly inexorable trend towards Fine Art's cultural marginality will be reinforced, in personal terms, by the myth-shattering reality of the artistic lumpenproletariat.

Against these trends the Hornsey students and others restated the cultural claims of a Romantic, bohemian artistic vanguard; in the image of the Romance of artistic practice, the counter-culture's wider public face constructed the modernised, art-as-media institutions of the alternative press.

But, as even a cursory glance at the biographies of rock's most significant names, its most glittering stars over the past 15 to 20 years reveals, music offered a further avenue of escape, a way to indulge the dream of the artistic career. Rock music offered art students a 'solution': one that guaranteed the possibility of creative authenticity, of direct, up-to-date and powerful cultural intervention as well as the chance of material success. Music offered the escape route into the Romantic dream of a life of creative play while at the same time offering the crucial element of survival, of avoiding a too detailed, first-hand experience of the depressing realities of past bohemias' poverty models. Musicians drew on images of art for their attempts to redefine their practice, but artists also saw the qualities of rock's aggressive, self-confident cultural power as a solution to art's own cultural marginality. Music offered the chance for a further institutional redefinition of art's continuing crucial problem of modernisation and cultural relevance: another route into art-as-media.

The art colleges were the natural setting for musical innovation and redefinition during the counter-culture's vital moment: as they were for the Jazz-Beat milieu and as they continue to be up to the present. The local Art School Dance has always been about style, creativity and the affirmation of the values of a creative community: the bands coming directly out of the

art school milieu knew this, as did those who wanted to enter music's modern, artistic world. The Pink Floyd, for instance, may have consolidated their position in the progressive vanguard at London clubs like Middle Earth and UFO, but as John Hopkins noted in IT 10, they first served an apprenticeship of 'a year or two on the London Art College scene' before being discovered by the 'hip' at the Marquee in 1966. Where else could they go? Where else would the rationality of chance and the ridiculous be celebrated: the type of career 'decision' made by the mystical hippie favourites, the Third Ear Band ('the first mystical OVERGROUND (celestially-orientated) musical group to hit the scene'), as told by the group's drummer Glen Sweeney to issue 4 of Muz Murray's Gandalf's Garden:'

> What we're into now with the Third Ear Band really began when we were on a gig, and some kind person, or mysterious force, or whatever it was, stole all our amplification equipment and just left us with our instruments. This seemed so significant that we took it as a sign. Apparently we had been going in the wrong direction by going electric, and that event caused a tremendous change in our whole way of approach.

> We choose between life as style, style as value, value as facts; the ethic of the strutting Beautiful Person attacking the modern state where it likes, not where it hurts. The alarm bells ring for nobody but ourselves; if you eat health foods, you must expect to look like a banana.
>
> David Widgery, OZ 6
>
> Are we merely another of those neo-Dadaist confidence tricks common to the cultural ebblines to be enjoyed equally by perpetrators and public but not to be taken seriously, or do we really hold within ourselves the living germs of a real and worthy new society?
>
> Phil Parsons, IT 24, Jan19-Feb.1, 1968.

The point about the bohemian counter-culture in 1967 and 1968 was that it was firmly committed to the definition of life as style: and what's wrong with looking like a banana anyway? Bohemian style was, and always had been about choosing its own cultural targets; always had been suspicious of external, imposed values and facts that couldn't be proved in terms of its own frame of cultural, essentially artistic reference. The counter-culture was only following the precedent of its chosen form of cultural strategy, which for two hundred years had stressed the belief in the shock tactics of an aesthetic revolution spear-headed by the deeper visions, the more profound creative powers of a 'free' artistic vanguard. Its problems were not, directly, the problems of the working-class - they were the problems of making sense of the cultural location of artistic practice: the problem of art's inner and cultural conventions; the problem of forced, controlled essentially uncreative work; the problem of a growing sense of class and cultural marginality. In deriding the counter-culture for its selfish individualism, its cheque book elitism, what Widgery, the contemporary Left, and the

majority of subsequent analyses failed to realise was that it was all about attempting to turn what according to more othodox political theories were strategic disadvantages into a celebration of its history, of its essential qualities: into a style of cultural critique able and ready to attack the institutional organisation of capitalist culture in less predictable ways.

The art and style of bohemian refusal - whatever its form, whatever its targets, whatever its ideological inclinations - had always believed in taking the opposition by surprise in its forays into the mundane, philistine world of bourgeois culture; in its attempts to construct a style of cultural intervention denying conventional, dominant, antagonistic ways of seeing. What always bound the loose content of the bohemian style together and which marked the '60s counter-culture off from the majority of surrounding cultural critiques, was the first ingredient in its armoury of shock tactics: a conviction drawn from an initial sense of optimism. Whether born from the desperation of Hornsey, or just the blatantly hopeful, sheer innovatory energy put into the organisation of alternative media forms, the counter-culture's great strength - as had been the case with Morris, the PRB, Dada, Surrealism and the rest of the historical entourage - was a belief in its purpose and vision, its hope and its will to win. Tell any ageing hippies today that it was all dreams, that the political ideologies were naive, that there was no real structure to the counter-culture, and they'll answer with: but they were good times - it was <u>fun</u> - we <u>believed</u> we could change things - you call us boring?, at least we had <u>visions</u> and a sense of <u>optimism</u> - middle-class layabouts?,

we didn't have no class but we sure had style, and that's what we left you lot if only you could see it - you've got Marx and Hegel and the logic of history, we had the powers of chance, spontaneity, idealism and the romance of history - you're heroes preached responsibility through puritanism and sobriety, ours awareness through a celebration of life. And so on, as notes on history and culture are compared. Track them down in Bali, Goa, Australia or the Welsh mountains, the odd university department or the executive suites of Virgin Records and they'll tell you something like this.

But does it matter how they would tell it? The answer perhaps highlights one problem of writing a sociology thesis: the imperative of objective scholarship versus the demand for the importance of personal experience I drew attention to in my introduction. We're drawn back to the problems of Centre theory where the hippie 'voice', any voice is discounted and ignored in the interests of the 'real' relations of cultural production - but where we're left with, and only with, a garbled message from the mouth of Theory. But then, in a sense, the real task is not one of reading the 'reality' of the hippie cultural, ideological response: it's why certain cultural issues have proved historically important, remained pressing and important in Britain in the late I960s, and continue to be felt today. And my own opinion of the hippies? The question I've been avoiding? My answer must remain: it's easy to laugh and dismiss. And when we now re-read Reich or Roszak, or dig out Tom Nairn's declarations about the relative merits of working-class political organisation and North London art students, or even consult OZ and IT.....at best they seem quaint, more

usually ludicrous.

But even these judgements partly miss the point: which is about showing how certain cultural problems were real, were experienced as real, rather than about what the hippies meant for 'the movement', the 'struggle' or whatever we wish to call it. The hippie response was a 'fun' solution, but the problems - of definitions of work and leisure, of the power and status of art under capitalism, of the nature of cultural protest - remain; and remain both pertinent and pressing. Look at punk. Look at the way the art school aesthetic has become both integral and crucial to the style of recent musical expression. Politically and culturally, the hippies cannot be dismissed as either a glorious celebratory moment or a temporary aberration in the more serious trajectory of strategies of resistance: as I've stated, the problems remain, even when solutions and modes of interpretation change. Like sociology itself, the style of the hippie solution must be located in its historical and institutional context - a thought which makes me conclude that in ten years time a willing researcher will write an entirely different thesis on the counter-culture.

Notes and References: Chapter Twelve.

1. Lewis, 1978, p.9
2. Hebdige, 1981, p.42
3. Hoggart, 1958, p.248
4. Booker, 1969, p.79
5. Frith, 1978, p.20
6. The 'Americanisation of language' meant that the new words were describing practices and realities fresh to Britain:

> Many 'Americanisms' were ways of dealing linguistically with concepts that were themselves of largely American origin. A social phenomenon would occur in America, an American word would be coined to describe it; and then the word would cross the Atlantic to Britain. As examples of this process, one might cite the words 'baby-sitter' and 'teenager' and the social and economic implications that these words and their usages carried.
> Snowman, 1977, p.267

7. Burgess, 1972, p.34
8. Waterhouse, 1962, p.105
9. ibid., p.47
10. Cohn, 1969, p.12
11. ibid., p.14
12. Steele Perkins and Smith, 1979; Savage 1982
13. Sanders, 1975, p.64
14. Nuttall (1970), seems to see the Beat Generation in America as a mixture of contrived neo-Parisian existentialism and a middle-class identification with 'arty' delinquency.
15. Huxley, 1977, p.63
16. William Carlos Williams, in Ginsberg, 1959, p.8
17. Kenneth Rexroth remembering pre-Beat San Francisco, in Cook, 1971, p.60

18. Rigney and Smith, 1961, p.16

19. ibid., p.23

20. Cook, op.cit., p.9

21. See Walley, 1980, p.48. Setting the late '50s L.A. scene, Walley speaks of Herb Cohen, later to head Zappa's Bizarre record label, but who opened a coffee house on Sunset Strip in 1958:

> The timing was perfect. 1958 was the height of the Beat period, and within a year sixty-four other coffee houses opened in the Los Angeles area. Characteristically, Herb wasn't thinking exclusively about the cultural aspects of it. 'It was just something to do at the time...it was better than working at Lockheed.'

22. Wolfe, 1969, p.8

23. ibid., p.9

24. Leary, 1970, p.288

25. Charles Perry, The Gathering of the Tribes; in Obst, 1977, p.190

26. Wolfe, op.cit., p.223. See also on this point, Anthony, 1980, p.107

27. Wolfe, op.cit., p.223

28. See comments by Anthony, op.cit., p.95, about Bill Graham's bill-sticking exploits around Berkeley advertising the concerts at his Fillmore auditorium:

> By the summer of 1966, Graham's posters began to be recognised as art. He quickly realised that as soon as posters were stapled to telephone poles they were removed by a growing poster-collecting public.

29. Adler, Music, Love and Promoters, in Obst, op.cit., p.206

30. cited in Cohn, op.cit., p.237

31. Frith, 1982, p.15

32. Wilcock, Under-ground, in Howard & Forcade (eds), 1972, p.48

33. Rubin, A Yippie Goes to Washington, in Obst, op.cit., p.170

34. Rubin, 1970, p.115
35. See Charters, 1977, p.339. Charters mentions Kerouac's disowning of the American counter-culture in 1968, the year before he died. He said, 'I'm pro-American and the radical political involvements tend elsewhere...' She comments: 'He couldn't understand how Jerry Rubin, Mitchell Goodman and Abbie Hoffman had evolved from his work'.
36. William S.Burroughs, in Howard & Forcade, 1972, p.34
37. Frith, 1982, p.3
38. Paul Goodman, Objective Values, in Cooper (ed.),1968, p.123
39. Frith, 1981, p.221
40. Cook, op.cit., p.155
41. Cook, op.cit., p.156
42. McLaren, Over 21, May 1982, p.100
43. Melly, 1970, p.222
44. ibid., p.220
45. ibid., p.132
46. ibid., p.20
47. Nuttall, 1970, p.47
48. ibid., p.116
49. ibid., p.120
50. 1967 and '68 are the crucial years in the making and presentation of hippie counter-cultural style. But for a style turning the importance of 'watershed' years into the ridiculous, I thoroughly recommend the opening pages of Catherine Itzin's Stages in the Revolution.
51. see Davidson, 1982, p.79
52. King Mob Echo, no.1, April 1968
53. see Seale and McConville, 1968, p.48

54. Neville, 1971, p.120

55. cited in Palmer, 1971, p.23

56. circulation figures quoted from Noyce, 1979, pp.153/4, p.219

57. Neville, op.cit., p.138

58. Palmer, op.cit., p.13

59. Walker, Periodicals since 1945, in Fawcett and Phillpot, 1976, p.46

60. Neville, op.cit., p.53

61. Neville, op.cit., pp.14/15

62. Neville, op.cit., p.211

63. cited in Hamm, 1979, pp.453/4

64. Cohn, op.cit., p.157

65. Frith, 1982, p.8

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